



ECHIDNA GIVING LIFE SKILLS & MINDSET CHANGE PROJECT

Co-Creating Tools for Measuring Impact of Life Skills on Adolescents: Insights from Scoping Study in East Africa

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Disclaimer: The findings and recommendations made in this report represent the views of the study authors and are not necessarily representative of Echidna Giving.

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Last but not least, our gratitude to the Jaslika family for the many long hours that they put into the study process.

Report Highlights

Study Participants

49

Key informants interviewed (35) from 16 of 63 purposively selected CSOs in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and professionals (14) working in the Education and Life Skills spaces.

Gender

60%

Organizations perceived girls as needing more exposure than boys to Self-Confidence, followed by Self-Esteem, Communication and Leadership Skills to redress systemic barriers to gender equality and level the playing field.

Life Skills

40

Life Skills taught through programs but Decision-Making (75%), Interpersonal and Critical Thinking Skills (69%) most commonly emphasized for adolescents across the 16 organizations.

Assessment

80%

Organizations willing to participate in co-creating assessment tools for Life Skills. Broad recognition that tools currently in use to measure impact on adolescents may not be effective or user-friendly.

About Jaslika Consulting

Founded in 2016, Jaslika Consulting is a Nairobi-based firm that combines professionalism and passion to deliver quality services and inspire change. It offers advisory, training and research services focusing on education, child rights, and environmental sectors to provide sustainable solutions that permeate cultural and generational boundaries. Since its formation, Jaslika has been working on issues of values, gender and equality. In 2017, it completed a pioneering study on positive deviance in primary schools in Kenya.

Sheila Wamahiu is a co-founder and director of Jaslika Consulting. Among others, she has to her credit the national study on **Value-based Education in Kenya: An Exploration of Meanings and Practices**. Commissioned by the Women Educational Researchers of Kenya, the Minister of Education, Government of Kenya launched the report in 2015. One of the issues explored in the report was the implementation of Life Skills Education in primary schools in the country.

The Jaslika Team



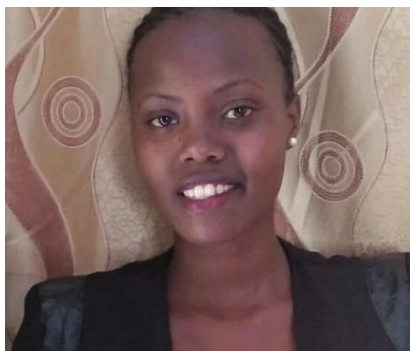
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

	Definition
AET	Africa Educational Trust
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
CSO	Civil Society Organization
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOT	High Order Thinking
KCDF	Kenya Community Development Foundation
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KLC, Komo	Komo Learning Centers
KTO	Karibu Tanzania Organization
LGIHE, Luigi	Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MZF, Milele	Milele Zanzibar Foundation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PEAS	Promoting Equality in African Schools
PIASCY	Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Youth
RELI	Regional Education Learning Initiative
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TMF, Trailblazers	Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VALI	Values and Life Skills
WERK	Women Educational Researchers of Kenya
WHO	World Health Organization
Zizi	ZiziAfrique

Executive Summary

Life Skills matter to the success of adolescents. Both ministries of education and civil society organizations in the East African region understand this. For several decades now, ministries of education and civil society organizations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda have recognized the usefulness of Life Skills especially for combating HIV and AIDS, sexual and gender-based violence as well as resolving conflicts, promoting peace, nurturing leaders, empowering girls, advancing gender equality and changing mindsets. Life Skills are incorporated into the formal school curricula and co-curricular activities and are the programmatic focus of many civil society organizations in the region.

Despite the growing awareness of their usefulness, ministries of education and the civil society organizations grapple with accurately assessing the impact of Life Skills suggesting possible capacity and programming gaps. Echidna Giving, a private funder, is exploring the possibility of addressing these gaps by providing support for a collective impact initiative around the development of assessment tools in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It commissioned Jaslika Consulting, a Nairobi-based research firm with strong education sector research background, to undertake a scoping study in the three countries. The study aimed at determining the viability of supporting the co-creation of open access Life Skills assessment tool or tools and the willingness of sampled organizations to participate in the process.

The study combined a desk review with in-depth interviews. Sixteen civil society organizations were purposively selected from a long list of 63 working in the adolescence and life skills space in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. A total of 35 informants representing the sampled organizations participated in the study as key informants while an additional 14 individuals with knowledge and expertise in the Education and Life Skills sectors both internationally and in the region were consulted informally.

Five key findings emerged from the study:

- 1. Decision-making is the most frequently prioritized Life Skill for adolescents across the East African region.** Twelve (75%) of the organizations prioritized it. Though more than 40 Life Skills were mentioned, those emphasized by over 50 percent of the organizations were Interpersonal Skills and Critical Thinking; Effective Communication and Self-Awareness; Problem-solving; Self-Confidence and Leadership Skills. They included skills of “Knowing and Living with Oneself” (Self-Awareness/Self-Concept, Self-Confidence), “Knowing and Living with Others” (Interpersonal Skills, Effective Communication) and what is commonly referred to as the higher order thinking (HOT) skills (Decision-Making, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving).

The prioritization notwithstanding, informants viewed the three categories of Life Skills --- Knowing and Living with Oneself, Knowing and Living with Others and the higher order thinking (HOT) skills as interrelated, interdependent and reinforcing each other.

- 2. The prioritized Life Skills reflect organizational goals and intervention objectives related to the needs of girls and/or adolescents living in marginalized communities, both rural and urban.** The choice of Life Skills was triggered by recognition of critical gaps in the ability of adolescents to

adapt and deal effectively with demands and challenges of life, and to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, have self-management skills and enable them to change their surroundings and lead a healthy productive life. For school-based interventions, the higher order thinking skills were considered to be important for positive academic outcomes. Though explicitly mentioned by only three organizations, development of the personal agency of adolescents was embedded in the skills prioritized by the majority of organizations.

Similar skills were prioritized for both genders. Nonetheless, it was broadly recognized that girls face deeply entrenched prejudices and barriers, therefore requiring more exposure than boys to develop Self-Confidence, Self-Esteem, Communication and Leadership Skills among others. Interventions that focused largely on girls' Empowerment and Agency also, in some instances, incorporated skills to build their economic capacity. These, together with those organizations targeting the youth, placed an emphasis on skills related to financial literacy.

The prioritization of skills was arrived at largely through consultations with various stakeholders, including young people in some cases; needs assessments; desk reviews and experiential knowledge of the implementing organizations. Nevertheless, the prioritized skills were similar to those in the official school curricula and were linked to the Life Skills frameworks articulated by the ministries of education/national curriculum development centers in the region. These frameworks, which benefited from the conceptualization of Life Skills by the UN agencies (World Health Organization and UNICEF) in the late 1990s/early 2000s in turn influenced the adoption of the three categories of Life Skills (Knowing and Living with Oneself; Knowing and Living with Others; and Decision-Making, referred to by some as the HOT skills) by the sampled organizations in Kenya, and to some extent, in Uganda. There were few organizations whose Life Skills frameworks were aligned with other international frameworks. Educate! was one of the exceptions; though the Life Skills that they had prioritized was based on their own research, they discovered the 6Cs Deep Learning Competency Framework to be a useful tool to validate their own conceptualization of Life Skills and take their work forward.

- 3. Many organizations have tools to measure and assess life skills but they may not be effective or user-friendly.** They may not also be suitable for measuring and assessing impact on adolescents across different sectors, themes and contexts. Some of the organizations clearly struggled to measure the impact of their interventions, and were in need of capacity development. Overall, assessment of Life Skills was still in its infancy in the region.

Seventy-five percent of the organizations used rating scales (either self-reporting or rated by others) and survey questionnaires. Rubrics had been developed by 25 percent of the sampled organizations. Other tools that were in use included observation checklists, log/record, portfolio, and performance assessment. Some of the organizations, such as the Africa Education Trust, Camfed, Educate! and Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education used multiple tools to assess and measure the impact of Life Skills on beneficiaries. Some of the tools in use were in the pilot stage or yet to be implemented at scale.

Few organizations had adopted internationally developed tools. The Komo Learning Centers was one such organization that was piloting a tool influenced by the Youth Power's Positive Youth Development toolkit. Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation used a monitoring tool that the Ugandan

Ministry of Education led in co-creating supported by UNICEF. The Women Educational Researchers of Kenya adapted a tool developed by the Nairobi-based African Population and Health Research Center. There were also examples of organizations such as PEAS, AfricAid Camfed, and Karibu Tanzania Organization, which had customized assessment tools or were in the process of developing in collaboration with international or national experts.

- 4. There is a need for understanding what kind of tools---quantitative or qualitative---work best in measuring and assessing Life Skills in particular contexts.** While informants from at least three organizations personally found qualitative tools to be more appropriate for their contexts, there was no consensus on this issue. Capacity needs were highlighted with regard to the ability of teachers to teach, plan their lessons and assess Life Skills. Concerns were also raised about the capacity of implementing organizations to assess and evaluate Life Skills interventions. Other measurement and assessment-related needs emerging from the study were:

- Building the capacity of teachers to assess learners using tools that are friendly, easy to analyze, practical and relevant
- Building on existing tools instead of re-inventing the wheel
- Measurement of longer term impacts and short term effects
- Standardization of assessment tool that is flexible enough to address relevance in different contexts, is learner sensitive and reduces costs
- Creation of a repository where one could find tools for the measurement of specific Life Skills
- Consolidation of assessment items that can measure different indicators
- Strengthening local ownership, appropriateness and relevance of the tools
- Leveraging existing partnerships/programs to introduce changes in teacher practices and assessment of Life Skills
- Coordination and dialogue between funding agencies to avoid duplication of effort and resources.

- 5. Over 80 percent of the sampled organizations expressed interest in participating in the co-creation of assessment tools albeit in different capacities.** There were two emerging perspectives on the viability of co-creation of tools or set of tools. The majority felt there was a need for tools that would effectively assess the impact of Life Skills interventions on adolescents. A smaller number of organizations (25%) stated that the co-creation of additional tools for their programs was not needed as they already had tools and systems in place to measure impact. However, they identified conditions under which they would be willing to participate in a co-creation process as:

- If the theme around which the tool is developed is relevant to the needs of their organization. Some themes proposed were: special needs of adolescent girls; employability skills targeting youth; and quantification of economic impact on adolescents.
- If tools are developed that measured different programs on the same metrics to determine differences in impact, and yielded comparable data across organizations.
- If the co-creation process is inclusive and transparent.
- If key concepts, such as Life Skills, and the co-creation process (what it means and what the process entails) are clarified so that all participants are on the same page.

Recommendations

The study found not only is it viable, but that the majority of organizations are willing to actively participate in a collective impact initiative around Life Skills assessment tools. Based on this, we strongly propose that Echidna Giving supports a process of co-creation of a set of tools to assess the impact of Life Skills on adolescents, especially girls, in the region. Co-creating a set of tools rather than one tool would address the needs of diverse contexts, interests and capacity of the different participating organizations. This may be done using a phased approach in which the creation of tools is clustered around thematic skills groups building on common priorities rather than country groups. One possible theme around which the collective impact initiative could be developed is girls' Agency.

The study found differences in the levels of expertise and experience of the sampled organizations. A number of recommendations therefore revolve around criteria for team leadership and participation in the collective impact initiative. It also reiterates the need for building consensus around what co-creation means and what the process entails, and the clarification of fundamental concepts (for example, gender and Life Skills) so that there is a unity of purpose, common agenda and vision, and ownership of the process and outcomes right from the outset. On the issue of ownership, the study recommends involving the ministries of education and/or line institutions as participants where possible to influence government uptake.

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01

Introduction

Introduction

Echidna Giving, a private funder, envisions a world in which the promise of girls' education has been delivered. In this world, girls grasp greater opportunities to learn and earn, and for those who have children, passing on the value of education to them. Educated girls enable better prospects for each successive generation, and help generate more resilient and equitable societies, which benefit everyone. For girls to persist in school, succeed in developing academic skills, improve mental and physical health and have financial stability, they must develop a wider array of skills. The same skills foster positive relationships with others and enable them to take greater agency over their choices.

Early childhood and adolescence are pivotal moments in a girl's life. During both these periods, the cognitive and socio-emotional skills that girls develop are critical to academic learning and engagement both in and beyond the classroom. Echidna Giving's strategy to accelerate outcomes for girls builds on this knowledge and identifies two strategic areas of action, the first centering around quality, gender sensitive programs at early childhood; and the second on skills to thrive at adolescence. This report presents the findings of a scoping study focusing on the latter strategy area.

In October 2018, Echidna Giving commissioned two parallel studies, one in India and the other in the East African region, to provide insights on the viability of supporting the co-creation of tools to assess the impact of Life Skills interventions in the targeted study locales. Specifically, they contracted two consultants with a strong education sector research background to engage with the major organizations in East Africa and India already implementing Life Skills programs to understand:

1. What skills do these organizations most commonly emphasize?
2. Why did they select these particular skills?
3. Do they measure these skills, and if yes, how?
4. What are the most common measurement/assessment needs?
5. How many organizations are interested in participating in collective action around developing new assessment tools and under what conditions?

In doing so, the consultants were expected to help identify where there is an overlap of skills. The researchers were also required to explore the willingness of the selected organizations to participate in a collaborative project to develop and use an open source assessment tool(s).

This report presents the findings of the East African study. It is organized in six chapters. The first chapter presents a synopsis of the background and purpose of the study while the second provides a snapshot of the approach and process. Chapter 3 offers glimpses of the sampled organizations against a backdrop of the policy landscape for Life Skills programs for adolescents in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Chapter 4 delves deeper into the understanding, rationale, prioritization and description of different Life Skills models implemented by the selected organizations. Chapter 5 explores the viability and willingness of the organizations to co-create assessment tools for measuring impact of Life Skills programs on adolescents. Finally, in Chapter 6 recommendations are made for Echidna Giving to consider as they move forward with their girls' education strategy.

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Study Approach and Methodology

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Study Approach and Methodology

The main purpose of the study was to establish the viability of supporting a collaborative initiative in the East African region around the co-creation of tools for assessing Life Skills. In order to improve practice and influence the government in ways that drive system level change, Echidna Giving believes a larger body of evidence relevant to the local context and comparable across organizations could be useful. Supporting the creation and validation of simple, field-level standardized evaluation and measurement assessment tools may help drive progress on generating this wider body of evidence of the impact of Life Skills. The study was guided by five main objectives. From these the broad and specific research questions were derived, and issues to focus on were identified as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Objectives by Research Questions and Focus Issues

Objectives		Research Questions	Issues Investigated
a.	To identify and generate long-list of organizations in East Africa implementing Life Skills programs	Which strategic organizations are implementing Life Skills programs for adolescents in East Africa? How do they situate their programming and role within the wider adolescent and Life Skills education landscape in the country?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and mission • Geographical coverage and outreach • Program focus • Interventions and activities overview • Adolescent and Life Skills education landscape in country and role of organization in it • Strategic partnerships
b.	To document Life Skills interventions implemented by selected organizations	How do they conceptualize Life Skills and implement related interventions for adolescents? What Life Skills do they focus on teaching? How are they taught? Why did they select these particular Life Skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for Life Skills • Life Skills approaches and interventions • Conceptualization and definition of Life Skills • Life Skills taught and prioritization • Delivery of Life Skills (methods) • Gender implications/focus • Challenges and opportunities • Lessons learnt
c.	To establish whether they currently measure these skills, and if yes, how they do so	Is the effectiveness of the teaching of these Life Skills currently being assessed/measured? If yes, how are they being assessed/measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment/measurement tools (purpose, type, targets, sensitivity to diversity) • Accessibility of tools to external organizations • Existing collaborations (development, use) • Key players in Life Skills assessment
d.	To determine the viability of co-creating a tool or set of Life Skills assessment tools	Is the co-creation of assessment tool or sets of tools to measure effectiveness of Life Skills a viable option?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for new assessment tool(s) • Viability of co-creation of tool • Potential users of new tool • Challenges in co-creation/use of tools
e.	To explore the willingness of selected organizations to participate in a collaborative project to develop and use an open source assessment tool or tools.	Would they be willing to participate in a collaborative project to develop and use an open source assessment tool? What role do they see themselves playing in the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to participate in co-creation process • Potential role • Recommendations

Study Design and Process

The study design was qualitative, combining in-depth interviews with a desktop review as the primary data collection techniques (Annex A). The qualitative insights were complemented by a quantitative on-line survey administered at the organizational level after each in-depth interview was conducted. The research tools were developed consultatively with the Indian counterpart taking the lead on construction of the on-line survey using a Google Form, while the East African researcher steered the development of the interview guide. Both the on-line survey and the interview guide were informed by desktop reviews conducted independently in each region.

The study was organized into two phases. The first addressed objective one, that is, identification of strategic organizations in the three countries, and touched on objective two, which was to document the Life Skills interventions implemented by the selected organizations. In Phase 2, in addition to a deeper exploration of these interventions, objectives 3 to 5 were also addressed.

As highlighted in Figure 1, the study process consisted of six interrelated steps.

Figure 1: The 6-Step Scoping Study Process

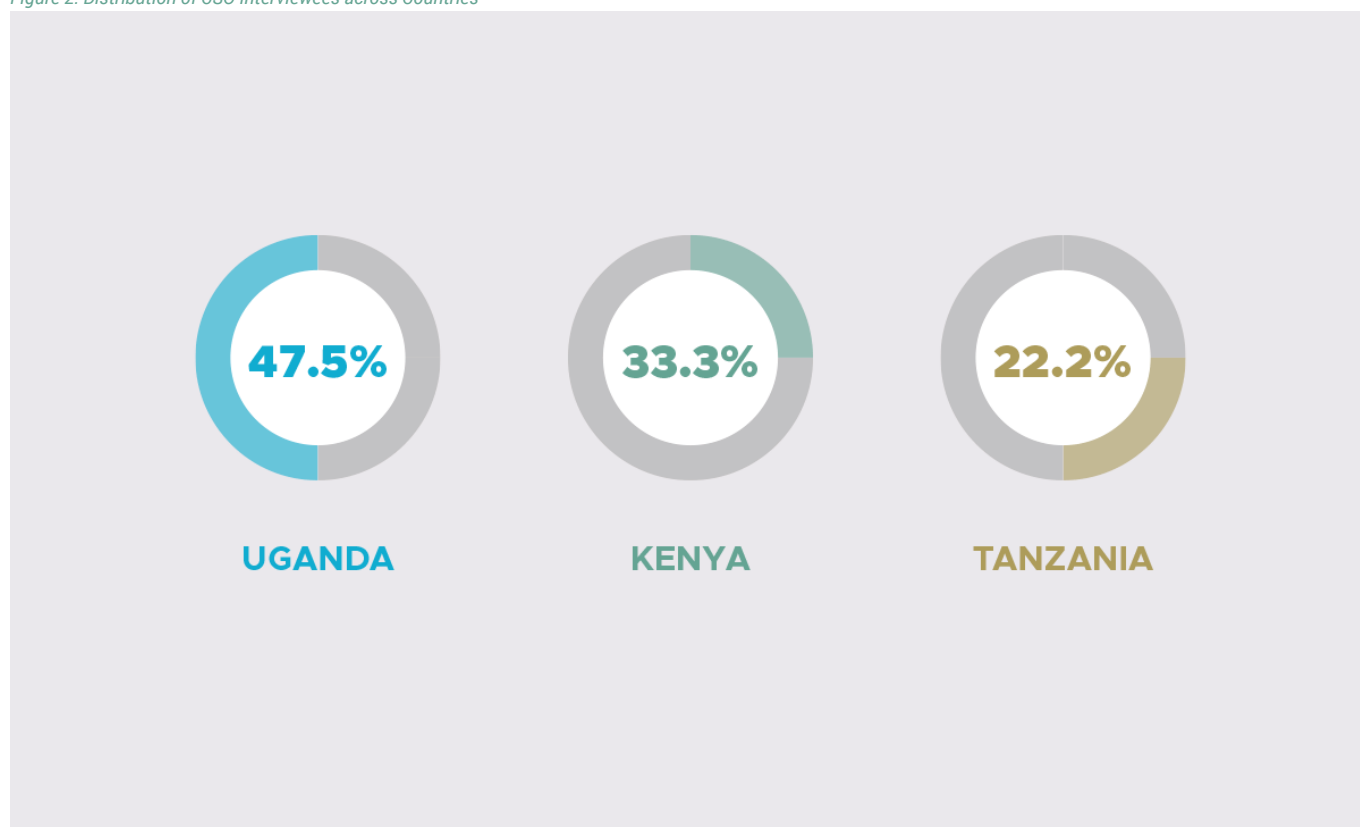


Sample Type and Size

Sixteen organizations working on Life Skills with a focus on adolescents and girls in the East African region were purposively sampled for in-depth interviews. Six organizations were selected each from Kenya and Uganda, while four were sampled from Tanzania. They were selected from a long list of 63 organizations that was generated through a desk review (document review and web search). Information on additional organizations was obtained using the snowballing technique. The 10-point criteria for sample selection were developed collaboratively in consultation with the Indian consultancy firm and the commissioning agency, Echidna Giving. The list of selection criteria is appended as Annex B.

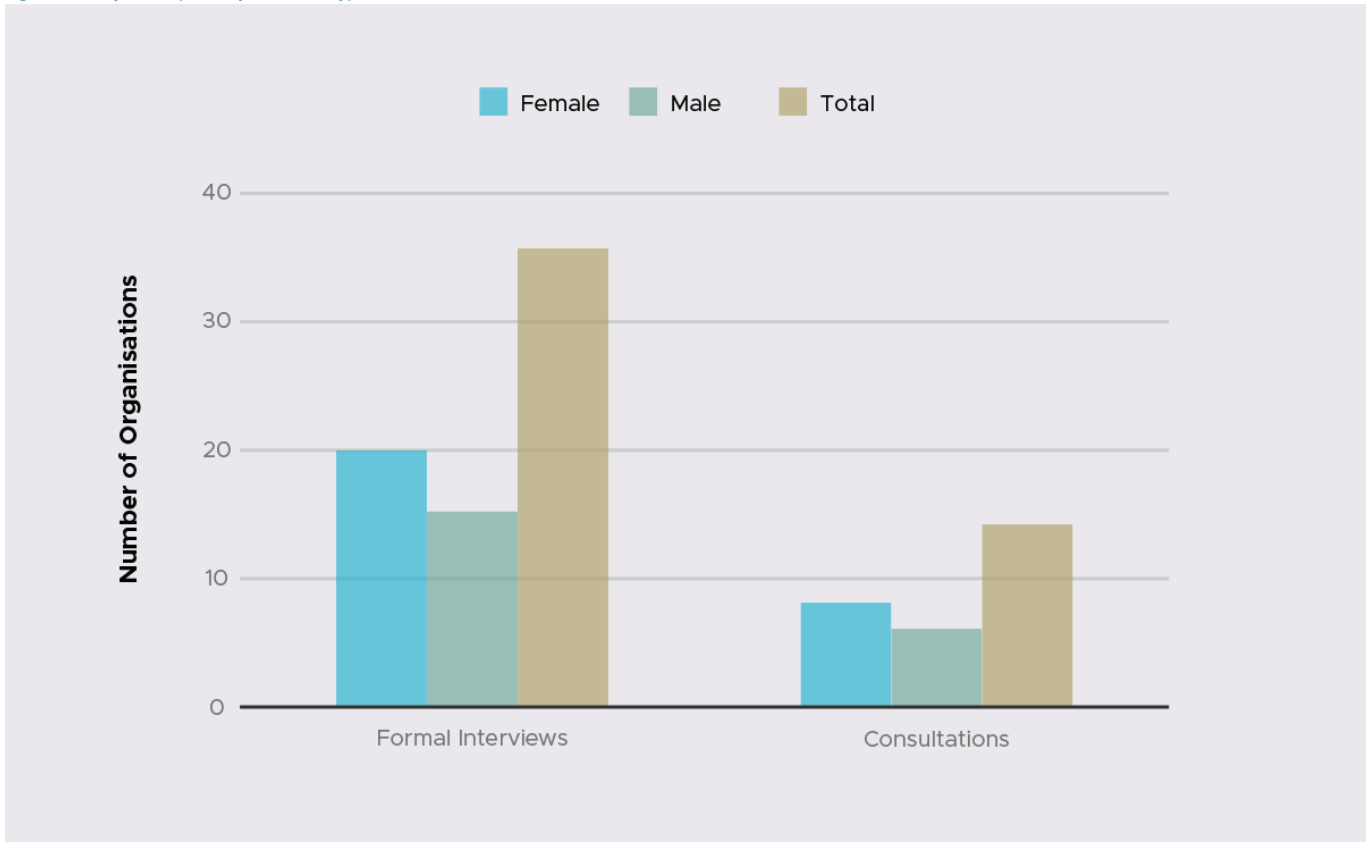
Across the three countries, 35 informants participated in the interviews. The majority of those interviewed were from Uganda. This may be attributed to the participation of multiple informants from each Ugandan organization in the interviews as compared to Kenya, which had two of the sampled organizations represented by one informant each.

Figure 2: Distribution of CSO Interviewees across Countries



In addition, 14 individuals from education and related networks were consulted mainly in the preparatory phase, bringing the total study participants to 49. The consultations greatly contributed to the sample selection and development of interview tools. Among those consulted were the coordinators of education sector civil society coalitions in Kenya and Uganda, and the focal persons of the Life Skills working groups of the Regional Education Learning Initiatives (RELI) from the three countries. Annex C contains a full list of study participants.

Figure 3: Study Participants by Interview Type and Gender



As indicated in Figure 3, there were more females than males in the study sample regardless of type of interview. Those participating in the formal interviews exceeded those consulted informally by three to one.

The expected responses from the on-line questionnaire were 16, or 1 respondent per organization. Of these, 12 (75%) completed the forms.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions cleaned prior to analysis, paying special attention to emerging themes and sub-themes relating to the research questions. The data analysis was done manually, and triangulated with data from other sources (consultations, online survey, and desk review). The unit of analysis was the organization. The study findings in this report are presented in narrative form supported by tables and graphs. Voices of the interviewees provide additional corroborating evidence. Consistent with qualitative research, the outlier view were used to challenge dominant perspectives, and gain deeper insights. The online survey was analyzed in Google sheet and bar graphs generated. The results of the survey are presented in Annex D.

Ethical Practice

The study process was guided by strict adherence to ethical guidelines for the conduct of research. Informed consent was sought from informants prior to interviewing. All informants gave their informed consent, the

majority in writing. (Informed Consent Form is attached as Annex E) All personal identifiers were removed from the interview transcripts before uploading on the shared drive, and in instances where direct quotes were used the anonymity of the informants was maintained. This notwithstanding, the names of all those who were interviewed and consulted, together with their organizations are appended to this report as earlier mentioned. The names of the sampled organizations have been retained in the main text when referencing factual data such as program and intervention names and descriptions.

03

Context and Overview of Organizations

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Context and Overview of Organizations

More than two decades ago, in Jomtien, the world identified “equitable access to appropriate learning and Life Skills programs” as Goal 3 of the Education for All Declaration. The Dakar Framework for Action went further to specify various risks, including HIV and AIDS, from which young people need to be protected by developing the relevant Life Skills. Since then, Life Skills Education has come to be seen as “important for young people to negotiate and mediate challenges and risks and enable productive participation in society” (United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2012). It is perceived to be critical in prevention and management of teen pregnancy, which together with early motherhood, are significant barriers to girls’ education and empowerment. Life Skills is also considered to be important in helping adolescent girls (and boys) to make informed choices about their sexual behavior.

A variety of terms are often used interchangeably with Life Skills. These include soft skills, 21st century skills, non-cognitive or non-academic skills, character building skills, transferable skills and socio-emotional skills among others. In many parts of the world, it is offered in formal education institutions either as part of the curriculum or as an extra or co-curricular activity. It is also offered in many non-formal education programs, especially those targeting youth and adolescents. The public sector and civil society, either singly or in collaboration, have been involved in its provision for adolescents both in and out of school. In this chapter, we sketch profiles of the 16 organizations sampled for the scoping study against a backdrop of the policy environment within which they operate.

Policy Landscape

Life Skills Education is currently offered in schools in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Though it has taken slightly different shape in each of the three countries under discussion, its introduction in the East African education systems may be traced back to the late 1990s and early 2000s. Perceived as a key strategy for the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, the inclusion of Life Skills Education in the formal education system was given impetus by the rapid spread of the pandemic.

The Official Life Skills Curricula

The Kenya Institute of Education, now known as the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, produced the first HIV and AIDS syllabus incorporating Life Skills education in 2000. The aim of this syllabus was to equip primary and secondary school children with knowledge and skills for HIV prevention. The following year, the Ministry of Education in Kenya recommended the teaching of at least one lesson on HIV and AIDS per week per class. Specific teachers were trained to provide information on HIV and AIDS, and trainers’ manuals were developed. It is not clear, however, whether all schools were assigned trained teachers. In addition, stigma against these teachers were reported because of their association with a sensitive issue like HIV and AIDS, prompting the Ministry to change tack and integrate the teaching of HIV and AIDS across

different subject areas. A 2007 report commissioned by the Ministry with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) found that “there was a definite need for a more targeted approach as the majority of students were without key skills” (Family Health International, 2010). These findings led the Kenya Institute of Education to envision a new course that would combine the Life Skills and HIV content into one stand-alone subject.

The Kenyan Ministry of Education rolled out Life Skills Education as a stand-alone, non-examinable subject in 2008. Schools were mandated to allocate one period each week in all primary and secondary schools to the teaching of the subject (UNICEF 2012). However, given the examination orientation of the Kenyan education system, the non-examinable status of Life Skills Education has led to its low prioritization by both school management and teachers alike. Its slot on the timetable is often replaced by the teaching of examinable subjects like Mathematics and English.

Implementation was also hampered by the shortage of trained Life Skills teachers who neither had the pedagogical skills to handle this subject nor the interest (Dayton & Manyeki, 2010; Wamahiu, 2015). Without any financial or other incentives to motivate them, teachers, frequently religious education or biology teachers, who are assigned teaching of Life Skills on top of their normal responsibilities, find it burdensome. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that gender norms discourage female teachers from some parts of the country to address issues to do with sexuality (Personal Communication, Life Skills Trainer NGO Sector).

In Uganda, Life Skills Education was also introduced as a strategy for HIV prevention and management in the 1990s. Low prioritization due to its non-examinable status, inadequate training of teachers and negative teacher attitudes, as well as resistance by sections of the religious community, posed barriers to its implementation through the formal primary and secondary curriculum. Currently, Life Skills Education is delivered through the Creative Arts and Performing Education curriculum for primary, which includes Music, Dance and Drama, Physical Education, Art & Technology. At the secondary level, Life Skills is currently not being taught through the formal curriculum, though there are indications that it will be covered under Physical Education in the revised secondary school curriculum.

Unlike Kenya and Uganda, Life Skills Education was introduced as an examinable subject in Tanzania at the outset in the mid 1990s in both primary and secondary schools. However, it was made non-examinable when education reforms were initiated in the mid-2000s, and like in Kenya, it dropped in status as a teaching subject. It was consequently embedded into carrier subjects, namely, Biology, Civic and Haiba na Mchezo (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010). In 2010, a national framework was developed to harmonize the implementation of Life Skills Education by all stakeholders targeting both in-school and out-of-school adolescents. (Ibid) It is not clear whether the guidelines were ever finalized to operationalize the framework or if they were, whether these are out of date. An informant expressed concern at the lack of an official strategy and syllabi for the delivery of Life Skills Education for out-of school youth, observing that what currently exists does not respond to their needs.

As Table 2 illustrates, the Life Skills Education syllabi in the three countries reveal striking similarities. The categorization of the Life Skills content into three core areas clearly reflects the influence of the United Nations agencies led by UNICEF. Though there have been some modifications since its introduction in the late 1990s as a response to HIV and AIDs, the model remains essentially the same. It is important to also note the strong emphasis on values in the syllabi in all three countries. In Kenya, they are included in the syllabus as core living values. In Uganda values are integrated into each topic. The specific values in the Life Skills curriculum in Tanzania could not be ascertained.

There are two additional skills categories in the Ugandan syllabi that are not included in the Kenyan and Tanzanian ones. These have to do with leadership skills and skills related to earning a living.

Table 2: Comparison of Core Life Skills Education Content in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

Country	Life Skills definition, Categories and Sub-Categories			
KENYA	Life Skills Definition: Psychosocial competences which enable an individual develop adaptive and positive behavior so as to deal effectively with challenges and demands of everyday life			
	Categories of Life Skills			
	Skills of knowing and living with oneself	Skills of knowing and living with others	Skills of effective decision-making	Core living values
	Self awareness, Self esteem, Coping with emotions, Coping with stress	Empathy, Effective communication, Conflict resolution & negotiation, Friendship formation, Assertiveness, Peer pressure resistance	Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Problem solving	Tolerance, Cooperation, Happiness, Simplicity, Love, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Peace, Freedom, Unity, Humility, Integrity
TANZANIA	Life Skills Definition: Large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills, which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self- management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life Skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health.			
	Categories of Life Skills			
	Skills of knowing oneself (self awareness)	Relationship or social skills	Cognitive skills	Strong emphasis on values
	Self efficacy, Self control, Self assessment, Managing emotions and stress, Recognizing and managing values and influences, Setting goals in life, Resilience, Time management	Communication, Friendship formation, Assertiveness, Negotiation/refusal, Cooperation, Empathy, Peer support and resistance, Conflict management, Team and community-building skills	Creative & Critical thinking in facing and adapting to the challenges of life, Informed decision-making, Problem solving, Analytical skills	Not specified
UGANDA	Life Skills Definition: Life Skills as personal and social skills required for young people to function confidently and competently with themselves, with other people and with the wider community.			
	Categories of Life Skills			
	Skills for knowing and living with oneself	Skills for knowing and living with others	Skills for decision-making	Skills as a tool for earning a living
	Self awareness, Self esteem, Assertiveness, Coping with emotions, Coping with stress	Relating with others, Negotiation skills, Empathy, Managing peer relationships, Effective communication, Non-violent conflict resolution	Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Decision-making, Problem solving	Alternative of earning a living, Entrepreneurship, Functions of entrepreneurs, Factors to consider before starting a business
	Skills of earning a living: Alternatives of earning a living, Entrepreneurship, Functions of entrepreneurs, Factors to consider before starting a business, Starting and managing income-generating skills.			
	Skills as a tool for developing leadership skills: Functions of a leader, Qualities of effective leaders, Leadership styles			
	Other core skills: Simple monitoring and tracking of school-club based activities by children, advocacy and lobbying skills for amplification of their voices and holding duty-bearers accountable for the protection rights of children.			

Sources: (1) Republic of Kenya, Sept 2008; (2) United Republic of Tanzania Dec 2010; (3) Republic of Uganda, 2011

Life Skills in Extra and Co-curricular Activities

Life Skills Education is also delivered through school clubs and other co and extra-curricular activities at both the primary and secondary school levels in East Africa. In Uganda, it is guided by various Life Skills frameworks and packages developed by the Ministry of Education. They include the Presidential Initiative for AIDS Strategy and Communication for Youth (PIASCY); the Menstrual Hygiene Management Reader and Kit; Report Tracking, Response and Referral Guidelines on Violence against Children; Child Participation Policy; and the Conflict and Disaster Management Guidelines. A draft national guideline on school-based clubs formation was recently validated and is currently going through the official approval processes.

In Kenya, the mentorship policy and guidelines were launched in February 2019. The documents provide guidance on mentorship services in schools. The nurturance of values and teaching of Life Skills are major components of mentoring programs within the school setting, though delivered as extra-curricular activity.

Assessment of Life Skills

The examinations boards and curriculum centers in the region have been struggling with assessing the impact of Life Skills. Though the curriculum materials that the researcher was able to access, like the teachers' handbooks, did emphasize the importance of assessing Life Skills, they did not provide specific guidance on how to do so. The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) was mandated to set examination papers for Life Skills Education offered in technical teachers colleges. However, the examinations only tested for recall of knowledge and not for acquisition and application of specific Life Skills and Values, and changes in attitudes and behavior of the learners. Consequently, the testing was discontinued with the last conducted in 2011. (Technical College Teacher Kenya, Personal Communication) This remains an issue that the ministries of education, examinations boards and curriculum development centers across the three countries continue to wrestle with in the on-going education sector reforms.

Impact of On-going Curricular Reforms on Life Skills Education

Kenya is currently undergoing curricular reform. The implementation of the new Competency-based Curriculum has already started in lower primary and is expected to be rolled-out at the secondary level in 2022-23. In the new curriculum, the teaching of Life Skills is integrated and starts in the foundational early years. The current curriculum framework prioritizes development of seven competencies: Communication and Collaboration, Self-Efficacy, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, Creativity and Imagination, Citizenship, Digital Literacy, and Learning to Learn. The proposed transferable skills framework developed by the Values and Life Skills Working Group in the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) sector overlap with some of these competencies identified in the Kenyan Curriculum Framework:

1. Thinking Skills: Critical thinking, Creative Thinking, Problem-Solving, and Learning to Learn.
2. Citizenship is in its own cluster. However, the sub-constructs under this cluster are not sufficiently unpacked to identify the core competencies.
3. Digital Literacy is one of the components of the broader literacy cluster.

In lower secondary, Life Skills Education is intended to remain a stand-alone subject while in senior secondary it will be integrated into the Community Service Learning, which will be a mandatory subject for all students

at the level. Community Service Learning in the Kenyan context is defined as “form of experiential approach to education that enables learners to apply their knowledge and skills in a different setting. It entails a balanced emphasis on both students’ learning and addressing real needs in their community” (Republic of Kenya, 2019) One of the partners that will support KICD to pilot the Community Service Learning is Educate!, an NGO that was part of our Ugandan sample.

In Uganda, Values and Life Skills are integrated into the recently launched Sexuality Education Framework. This 2018 Framework, which was developed with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), is a Life Skill package focusing on reproductive health. It consists of four broad themes, namely Human Development, Relationships, Sexual Behavior and Sexual Health and many key topics related to the themes as presented in Table 3. (Republic of Uganda 2018)

Table 3: Life Skills in the Ugandan Sexuality Education Framework 2018

Analyzing the media	Decision-making	Journaling	Self defense
Assertiveness	Effective communication	Leadership	Self-worth/self-esteem
Conflict resolution	Effective negotiation	Refusal skills	Time management
Coping with emotions	Goal setting	Self-awareness	Health-seeking behavior
Coping with stress	Help-seeking behavior	Self-control	Soft skills - Workplace/employability

Source: Republic of Uganda, 2018

The issue of Sexuality Education delivered through the formal education system has been contentious in all three countries of focus. The opposition to anything to do with or even perceived to be sex or sexuality education imparted through schools is not new. It has been led by the very powerful religious lobbies and alliances in the region, and has seen interfaith collaboration to block what they perceive to be inappropriate content for children and adolescents. In Uganda, the Ministry of Education with support from development partners, has engaged faith-based organizations through the inter-religious council to build consensus on the Framework.

The faith-based organizations in Uganda successfully lobbied against the Life Skills Curriculum for secondary education that was developed by the National Curriculum Development Center. The curriculum center, forced back to the drawing board, has covered Life Skills Education under Physical Education in the revised secondary education curriculum. The revised secondary education curriculum is yet to be launched.

The Alignment of Life Skills in the Education System

Life Skills Education has been in the education curricula in the three East African countries for about two decades now. Review of the policy contexts in Kenya and Uganda reveals that despite this, the subject is yet to be fully aligned to the education systems as highlighted in Table 4. Tanzania is not included here as we were unable to get the relevant information for it.

Table 4: Status of Life Skills Education in Kenya and Uganda

Enabling Context/System Alignment	KENYA				UGANDA			
	Absent	Emerging	Established	Advanced	Absent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
Policies (System-level documents that provide guidelines for Life Skills Education)		Emerging				Emerging		
Curriculum (Curricular modules designed and developed for teacher/teacher educator/learner use)			Established			Emerging		
Learning/Quality Goals (Mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of Life Skills delivery)		Emerging				Emerging		
Contextual evidence body (Evidence base on impact of Life Skills Education interventions)		Emerging			Absent			
Funding (Funding allocated for Life Skills purposes as part of education policy)	Absent					Emerging		
Pre-service + in-service Teacher Training (Provision of preparatory and ongoing professional development to teachers to ensure that teachers develop skills and expertise on inculcating such skills)	Absent					Emerging		
Assessments (Guidelines in place to assess impact of Life Skills Education on learners)	Absent				Absent			
Color Codes	ABSENT		EMERGING		ESTABLISHED			

Role of CSOs in Life Skills Provision

Civil society organizations supported by international partners complement government efforts. Their innovative work has made a difference to the Life Skills and Adolescence landscape and they continue to facilitate the uptake of the interventions by local authorities, national governments, curriculum centers and examinations boards. To some extent, they have been able to influence the formal Life Skills curricula both in terms of content and pedagogy. But mostly, they implement Life Skills programs in schools through clubs and extra-curricular activities, operating in a number of sectors such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); sexual and reproductive health (SRH); child protection; children and adolescent participation; girls', women's and youth empowerment; and sexual and gender-based violence among others. For example, in partnership with civil society organizations, United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) supported Girls Education Challenge (GEC) program in the East African region. The program targets the empowerment of the "girl herself" delivered through club-based Life Skills education in schools. In Uganda, UNICEF through the Basic Education and Adolescent Program supports interventions focused on adolescent girls to address issues around access, retention and transition in school, violence against children, gender and school health, implemented through the Girls' Education Clubs where both girls and boys are exposed to Life Skills. In Tanzania, the Karibu Tanzania Organization offers an alternative pathway for pregnant girls and girl-mothers, pushed out of school, to continue with their education. The Tanzanian government has recently recognized this alternative pathway.

Organizational Overview

The 16 organizations sampled for this study are few among the many working in the Life Skills space in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. They reflect the diversity that characterizes the field in terms of their purpose, programmatic focus, outreach and partnerships. However, none apart from the Life Skills Promoters of Kenya incorporate Life Skills as an organizational goal; rather, they tend to be implied in their vision and mission statements, viewed as strategies to achieve their goals and operationalized at the level of projects and interventions. The specific Life Skills interventions are described in more detail in Chapter 4. Here we paint a broad-brush picture of the selected organizations themselves.

Over half of the sampled organizations are local entities, registered and founded in East Africa. Less than half have roots in either the United Kingdom or in the United States of America. Women founded about a third of them. With the notable exception of the Africa Educational Trust, which celebrated its 60 years of existence in 2018, all the other organizations sampled were established in the last three decades: six of them in the 1990s, five in the 2000s, and four in the 2010s.

Just over a third of the organizations were operating in multiple countries. Educate! and the Africa Educational Trust had programs in both Uganda and Kenya. Many worked in rural, sometimes remote, hardship areas. For example, the latter was present in the conflict affected northern districts of Uganda, and in an arid and semi-arid county of Kenya. The Women Educational Researchers of Kenya implemented projects in diverse counties that included arid and semi-arid lands, coastal areas and urban informal settlements of Nairobi and Mombasa. Geographical coverage was sometimes restricted, however, due to security and resource constraints. While Educate! in Uganda covered all the five regions of the country, their partner schools were near trading centers. Similarly, AfricAid though working in two rural districts in the northern region of Tanzania, limited themselves to schools located within two hours drive from their office.

Table 5 presents brief descriptions of the 16 organizations and lists the specific Life Skills interventions that they are currently implementing.

Table 5: Brief Organization Profile and Life Skills Interventions

Organization Name and Description	Life Skills Interventions
KENYA	
Founded in 1995, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) is committed to generating evidence, strengthening research capacity and engaging policy to inform action on population health and wellbeing, the center has 130 scholars and professionals representing more than a dozen countries across Africa. It's located in Nairobi, Kenya .	The Advancing Learning Outcomes for Transformational Change (ALOT)
Woman-founded, girl-focused Kakenya's Dream is located in the Rift Valley of Kenya . Founded in 2008, it helps girls to reach their full potential through formal education and mindset programs addressing harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriages.	Health and Leadership; Network for Excellence; Kakenya's Center for Excellence Boarding School
The first indigenous philanthropic organization in Kenya , the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) supports communities to initiate and drive their own development agenda through capacity development, community philanthropy and local resource mobilization. They champion development agenda in four thematic areas: 1) Education Youth and Children. 2) Policy, Research and Advocacy. 3) Livelihoods. 4) Communication and Fundraising. It was formed in 1997.	Boys and Girls Mentorship Programmed for Secondary and Post Secondary Students

Life Skills Promoters (LISP) , a not-for-profit organization, has been in operation since 1999. It empowers young people and their influencers using empowering approaches and Life Skills as foundations. It works in most counties in Kenya , working closely with churches, communities, government departments, corporates and like-minded agencies.	Numeracy and Literacy for Youth; Kenya Youth Empowerment and Opportunities Program
Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK) is a women-founded organization that promotes women's empowerment and gender equality in and through education. Founded in 1994, its primary focus is research though it also implements programs and projects on issues around equity and equality, particularly relating to girls. WERK is implementing projects in at least 10 counties in Kenya , including arid and semi-arid lands and informal urban settlements.	Opportunity Schools Project; Operation Come to School; Adolescent Empowerment Project; Girls Education Challenge
ZiziAfrique's vision is a child who is well empowered with the basics to grow, to think and to thrive. It is a combination of three institutions: It hosts the Global Secretariat of the PAL Network; Zizi Foundation, which takes care of development projects; and a Limited Company. Currently, its focus is on TVET though its interest spans from early childhood to tertiary. Zizi is located in Nairobi, Kenya .	Ujana 360
TANZANIA	
AfricAid addresses issues of poor educational outcomes for adolescent girls at two key stages of their development. They work with younger girls to help them stay in school and complete lower secondary school; they also work with older adolescent girls in upper secondary. Founded in 2001, it covers the Northern region of Tanzania , with offices in Arusha and Moshi.	Binti Shupavu, Kisa Project
Camfed began in Zimbabwe in 1993. The mission of this woman-founded non-profit is to multiply girls' access to education and accelerate the benefits to individuals, their families and communities in Africa. In 31 districts spread over 9 regions in Tanzania , it is also present in Ghana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	Learner Guide Program; My Better World Life Skills Curriculum
In operation since 1990, Karibu Tanzania Organization (KTO) works in Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania. It is an umbrella ORGANIZATION covering different parts of the country, targeting teenage mothers. It works through almost half of Tanzania's 55 Folk Colleges.	Mama Course Right School Women Football Development Program
Milele Zanzibar Foundation (MZF) is a charitable trust founded in 2014 by Zanzibar is in diaspora who wanted to give back to the community. The organization focuses on three main sectors, namely Health, Education and Livelihood across Zanzibar.	Stem for Success; Champions in Health; Fursa Kijani (Green Opportunities)
UGANDA	
A UK-based charity, the Africa Educational Trust (AET) was founded in 1958. Its overall mission is to build education programs for excluded people in conflict-affected areas in Africa with an emphasis on promoting lifelong education and universal access to education. Apart from Uganda, AET works in three other countries in eastern Africa namely: Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan.	The BRITE; School Mother Program
Educate! 's purpose and main goal is to prepare the youth in Africa with skills to succeed in a global economy. It works with schools to see how best to reform what schools teach and how they teach it. While well established in Uganda (since 2009), it is relatively new in Kenya (2017). It also operates in Rwanda.	Educate! Experience; Community Service Learning (CSL)
Accredited in 2013 as an institution of higher learning by the Uganda National Council of Higher Education, Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education (LGIHE) creates opportunities for professional and personal development starting with the dignity and value of the person, methods of personal engagement and the meaning of work targeting teachers, students, parents and other professionals. It addresses crucial gaps in educational quality, school management, accountability and teaching efficiency within Uganda's context. It operates in 6 districts and reaches 10 other countries in Africa, including Kenya through its activities.	Reclaiming National Exams to Widen Achievements in Learning (RENEWAL) in Ugandan secondary schools; Fostering Employable Skills in East African Youth
Komo Learning Center (KLC) was first registered in 2009 in the United States and in Uganda in 2013. It focuses on three different sectors, which are Health, Livelihoods and Education. KLC operates in five districts in Uganda.	Do It Yourself Club, LEAP
Promoting Equality in African Schools (PEAS) is a UK-based charity. Its mission is to expand access to sustainably delivered quality secondary education across Africa. Since 2008, PEAS has built and operated not-for-profit secondary schools in communities in Uganda and Zambia where there is urgent unmet demand for secondary education.	Life Skills; Livelihoods; Literacy; Girls' Club
Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation (TMF) : Founded in 2013 by two former child mothers who turned their negative experience into a positive action. It contributes towards increased retention of girl children in school through ending teenage pregnancy and child marriages across 11 districts in Uganda . Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation provides tailor-made programs that address the critical needs of both in- and out-of-school adolescent girls.	Basic Education and Adolescent Development Program for Karamoja, East and West Nile

While most of the sampled organizations had a major focus on Education, some also focused on other sectors like Health, Livelihood and Research and Policy Engagement. For all the organizations in the study, Life Skills programming was not an end in itself but a means to an end. The end most frequently was perceived to be empowerment of girls, adolescents, or youth. It was also about achieving equity and equality, protection against violence, employment and supporting well-being for the excluded and marginalized. The Life Skills interventions, listed in Table 5, were embedded in larger programs, and taken to be strategies for reaching the organizational goals and priorities.

The data show that women were the founders or majority shareholders of 9 of the 16 organizations. Girls and women's empowerment remains entrenched in the vision and mission of at least five of the women-founded organizations and is reflected in the targeting of program beneficiaries. Another five organizations had some, not all, of their interventions that were girl-specific. Apart from one participating organization from Tanzania that retained an exclusive focus on girls, others involved boys in some activities as a strategy to achieve gender equality.

Strategic Partnerships

Analysis of the data reveals that 12 (75%) of the sampled organizations worked closely with different government organs in their respective countries to deliver on their vision and mission. Three of them, namely Kakenya's Dream, Kenya Community Development Foundation and AfricAid did not have direct government partnerships. They worked directly with the communities or targeted beneficiaries in their respective areas of operation. All the sampled organizations had built strong strategic partnerships, albeit at different levels --- government (national and local), civil society organizations, communities and schools --- to enable successful implementation of their programs.

04

Life Skills Programs

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Life Skills Programs

As noted in the previous chapter, the sampled organizations operated in a variety of contexts, sectors and geographies but were united in their targeting of adolescents, girls and/or boys, living in marginalized, economically underserved, often remote communities. As the discussion in the following pages shows, in these organizations, Life Skills served instrumental functions in helping the young people to deal with the myriad of challenges that they faced in their daily lives, whether at home, at school or at work. However, the study found multiple perspectives across and within sectors on the meaning of Life Skills. Pragmatic in their approach, many organizations preferred to identify Life Skills that they felt were critical for achieving their goals and packaging them in ways that would benefit the young people they work with, rather than designing programs to fit in with theoretical constructs that may not be relevant to their contexts.

Conceptualizing Life Skills

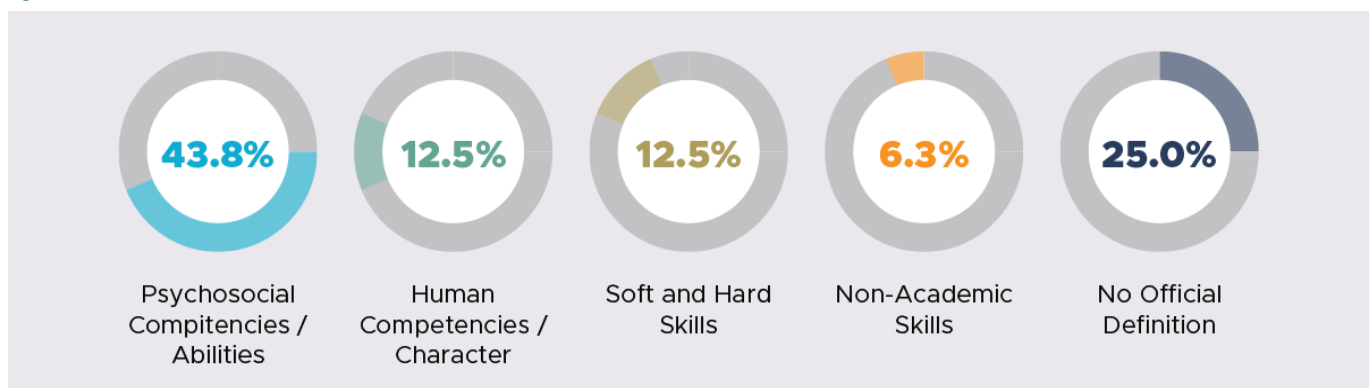
1. I would like to say that it is not easy task because of the different definitions of what Life Skills is. We investigated online and just yesterday we were speaking with the group of RELI about how to conceptualize it and actually, it is not easy.
2. I think it [definition of Life Skill] is evolving. We do not have a unitary definition or anything that is agreed upon.

Source: Voices of Key Informants, Uganda and Kenya

Defining Life Skills

Figure 4 reveals the divergent thinking on Life Skills. Seven of the 16 organizations or less than half categorized Life Skills as various psychosocial competencies or abilities, while two others perceived them as human competencies or character, and one as non-academic skills. While for some the emphasis was on skills development of adolescent girls or youth, depending on the organizational goal, a large number of those interviewed also emphasized systems change.

Figure 4: Definition of Life Skills



The term Life Skills was often used interchangeably with soft, 21st century, transferable, and employability skills. To one informant, transferable skills included “all those skills that are not confined to any sector or to any career like teamwork and communication skills”. Digital literacy was also categorized under transferable skills.

Differentiating between soft and hard skills, one informant explained: “We think about skills we cover in our programs in two broad buckets: There is soft skills; what probably we’d call Life Skills and then there is a bucket of hard skills which we refer to as business skills”.

Though most informants clearly differentiated soft skills from hard skills, two different organizations defined Life Skills as a combination of the two. Unpacking this combined category, one finds inclusion of a variety of hard skills such as academic, digital and financial literacy, numeracy and occupational safety.

Significantly, a quarter of the organizations did not have an official definition of Life Skills. For them the priority was not on spending time and resources defining the concept, but to identify and utilize critical Life Skills as a strategy to achieve their program goals and the desired impact on their beneficiaries.

Life Skills were broadly linked to the achievement of a range of positive academic and non-academic outcomes for the individual. Box 1 lists some of positive outcomes as mentioned by the informants. A key lesson learned from their experience with implementing Life Skills and Education interventions, according to an informant, was the association between academic outcomes and Life Skills. Said he, “When you improve in education, you become more confident and you want to participate more in class. And when you become more confident in yourself, you feel more comfortable to raise your hand”. While there was a general consensus on this, two other perspectives emerged:

1. Life Skills interventions cannot compensate for poor primary education foundation for adolescent girls (or other disadvantaged groups). “A-level girls are highly accomplished academically before we work on them,” observed an informant, “so giving them additional confidence and resilience and personal skills to develop and meet their own goals just seems to help them in their academics”. However, she observed that for the younger girls “the foundation that they have for primary school

Box 1: Informants Perspectives on Objectives of Life Skills

To help adolescents/youth to:

- Understand oneself, what he/she should do and for what purpose
- Fulfill roles and responsibilities
- Make It in life, chance to succeed, live comfortably
- Realize their full potential
- Draw access, performance, retention and transition to the next level
- Have meaningful, gainful employment, use it to earn daily bread
- Navigate personal, work space and environment
- Empower
- Face life situations in more noble manner with meaning and strategy
- Face life with certainty and meaning
- Live satisfying lives
- Have positive behavior
- Deal effectively with daily challenges
- To face environmental, contextual challenges preventing school completion

Source: Varied interviews

is so poor that we just don't see them making huge gains academically based on our Life Skills training".

2. Life Skills can and should prepare the majority of those learners who are unlikely to transit from lower secondary to the higher levels of education. Life Skills are essential for all, regardless of whether they are in or out of school. The school was perceived as a "socializing environment" offering an opportunity to develop Life Skills further.

Life Skills Education and Values

Values are essential components of Life Skills Education in the East African region (Republic of Kenya, 2007; Republic of Uganda, 2011, United Republic of Tanzania, 2010). In the present study, they were mentioned alongside Life Skills by a number of organizations and relevant networks. For example, the RELI sub-group working on Life Skills in Kenya is named Values and Life Skills Thematic Group. Similarly, in the TVET sector in Kenya, there is VALI, which is the Values and Life Skills Working Group. In interviews and some program documents, Values were mentioned explicitly while in others they were used interchangeably with Life Skills. Inconsistency was also noted across organizations; for example, resilience was considered to be a Life Skill by some organizations; in the proposed VALI framework, it was listed as a Value.

The emphasis on Values by Kenyan organizations as reflected in the names of the two Life Skills networks, reflect the influence of the Kenyan curriculum development center. As noted in Chapter 3, not only were Values an integral part of the official Life Skills Education curriculum in Kenya (and the region), KICD engaged with a number of civil society organizations on the development of Life Skills materials and frameworks. For example, a comprehensive study commissioned by WERK in 2015 provided justification for the inclusion of Values in the Kenyan Competency-based Curriculum Framework.

Life Skills' Frameworks

In a meeting held in October 2018, members of the Kenya RELI Thematic Group on Values and Life Skills were reminded of the three broad categories of Life Skills identified by KICD: Knowing and Living with Oneself, Knowing and Living with Others and Effective Decision-Making. This categorization was expected to "inform the way the Values and Life Skills Thematic Group thinks about and decisions it makes related to Life Skills" (Ogolla, 2018). As described in the previous chapter, these are the same three categories together with the core living values, which form the basis of the 2008 Kenyan Life Skills Education curriculum. This categorization was already in place and in use in Kenya almost a decade prior to its launch in 2008 (Nturibi and Okkelmo, 2000). The World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of Life Skills promoted by UNICEF has been adapted or adopted, and used extensively across East Africa including in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Life Skills is defined by WHO as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". Elaborating further, UNICEF describes it as a behavior change or behavior development approach, designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills.

The definitions of Life Skills by seven of the sampled organizations in the three countries were consistent with the definitions adopted in the official Life Skills Education curricula. There were at least four in Kenya and one in Uganda that referred to the broad categorization of Life Skills into three groups as earlier mentioned, though informants did not always acknowledge either UNICEF/WHO or the ministries of education/curriculum centers in their respective countries. One informant from a pioneering Kenya-based organization that was

formed in 1999, recalled reading “around models out there that were being used, and borrowed various models and packages — what we felt was appropriate for us”. Another informant recalled her understanding of Life Skills came from “various sources [...]. Have you heard of PIASCY? Part of the definition I got from there but then other resources you have — like the books in our library; the Internet”.

Three frameworks/theories of change that we found in use in Uganda are highlighted in Table 6. Educate!’s prioritization of Life Skills is influenced by the 6Cs Deep Learning Competency Framework developed by a global initiative, the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL). The NPDL promotes inquiry-based learning. It strives to engage students across the globe in deeper level learning and provide them with the skills to be lifelong learners, creative, connected and collaborative problem-solvers who can successfully participate and innovate in an increasingly interconnected world. The deep learning competencies, referred to as the 6Cs, are Collaboration, Creativity, Critical thinking, Citizenship, Character and Communication. (www.npdl.global) The NPDL offers a whole system change model. Educate! had their own Life Skills curriculum, which they subsequently discovered paralleled the 6Cs. The NDPL thus gave them a framework and a common language that they could use in communicating with the education community and other stakeholders, and in developing assessment tools. (<https://academy.experienceeducate.org>)

The Komo theory of change links the provision of Life Skills through the training of youth and teachers to improved secondary education and learning outcomes, and changes in school environment and student capacities. It builds on Youth Power’s Positive Youth Development framework, which places experiential learning at the center.

Table 6: Examples of Life Skills Model and Theory of Change

Organization	Framework Name and Source	Framework Description
Educate!	<p>6Cs developed by New Pedagogies</p> <p>Sources: New Pedagogies for Deep Learning 6Cs Educate!’s Design Academy focus on the 6Cs</p>	<p>“The 6Cs include: Critical thinking; Citizenship which is a broad bucket of things like leadership, pro-social attitudes, and generally skills that get you to think about your community in a positive way; Creativity, Character which includes things like self efficacy, grit, broadly what we classify like personality traits — so generally how you kind of regulate yourself and interact with others. Communication — so your ability to communicate with your peers, with other people within your community with things like persuasion, and things like that; and Collaboration – so this your ability to work well with others and teamwork and things like that. So you will notice that in these 6 categories of transferable or 21st century skills we have intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills. So skills that help youth regulate themselves and skills that help youth have more positive interactions with others. And we think this is a pretty comprehensive list of soft skills, transferable skills that the youth will need to succeed in any industry, not just as entrepreneurs.”</p> <p>Source: Key Informant, Educate! 2019</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Komo Learning Centers (KLC)</p>	<p>Theory of Change – Youth Led Do It Yourself Clubs rooted in Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach</p> <p>Adapted from: Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach</p>	<div style="text-align: center; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; font-weight: bold;">Improved Secondary Education & Learning Outcomes</div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Source: www.komolearningcentres.org 2019</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Promoting Equality in African Schools (PEAS)</p>	<p>PEAS Life Skills Program Framework</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: #4a7ebb;">PEAS' LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Source: Brief prepared for Echidna Giving, 2018</p>

The Promoting Equality in African Schools (PEAS) Life Skills Program Framework was designed to align with other successful Life Skills programs globally while addressing the needs of adolescent girls in the local context. It was developed in partnership with Mango Tree, a Uganda-based literacy and education company in 2015.

Life Skills Programs and Interventions

Life Skills programs are usually intended to promote the social and psychological well-being of adolescents by developing their capacity to make decisions and take actions, which impact on their lives and lives of those around them positively. The objectives of the programs implemented by the sampled organizations as listed in Box 1 reflect this overall purpose with the expected impact not only in their personal but also in their work lives.

The Life Skills programs reviewed had some elements in common. All responded to the felt needs of the participants; their objectives included behavior change and/or development; their content consisted of a combination of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills; and they tended to use interactive and participant-centered methods to deliver on content. Beyond this commonality, there were differences in terms of geographical coverage, targets and outreach. They also differed in some instances in terms of their overall approach and specific methods to teach Life Skills.

Some of these elements have been touched upon in the organizational overview presented in Chapter 3. Here we look deeper into them, focusing on Life Skills interventions by type, delivery models, and methodology used to reach the primary targets of interest to us, that is, adolescents and young people.

Life Skills Interventions

The 16 sampled organizations were implementing at least 40 Life Skills related interventions between them. Given that we purposively selected organizations working within formal education, an overwhelming majority of these targeted learners and were delivered directly within school settings. However, there were exceptions. For example, APHRC provided after school-hour support to learners in the community setting. Some organizations adopted a holistic approach by supporting the schools to infuse Life Skills into various aspects of their activities and programs. A good example is Educate! whose Life Skills components are embedded in its different programs: skills course, student business clubs, mentorship and training teachers and administrators. Others like AET that intervened in the school, had strong community engagements.

A smaller number of interventions were community-focused, targeting out-of-school youth through non-formal training and employment readiness interventions. Table 7 presents a bird's eye view of the various types of Life Skills interventions that the sampled organizations were implementing. It is important to point out that the categories are not mutually exclusive. There are overlaps between some of the categories.

Table 4: Status of Life Skills Education in Kenya and Uganda

	Life Skills Education Lessons	Mentoring/ Counseling	Clubs	Capacity Development Adolescents (In school)	Capacity Development Adults	Curriculum Support/ Engagement	Out-of-School support
AfricAid							
AET							
APHRC							
Camfed							
Educate!							
KaKenya's Dream							
KCDF							
KLC							
KTO							
LGIHE							
LISP							
MZF							
PEAS							
TMF							
WERK							
ZiziAfrique							
% (n=16)	37.50	75.00	43.75	62.50	68.75	37.50	37.50

Life Skills Education: As used in this study, Life Skills Education is a standalone subject taught in schools which enable the learners to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help lead a healthy and productive life through the application of a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills. In the East African region, as we have seen, Life Skills Education is in the primary and secondary school curricula and as such, time is supposed to be allocated to it on the school timetable for it to be taught. The reality is very different; the literature shows that schools use the time allocated for Life Skills Education to teach other subjects. As Table 7 indicates, six organizations (37.50) were offering Life Skills Education as part of their program. Of these, three organizations (18.75%) had designed their own Life Skills Education lessons that were taught as a subject by trained teachers during school time. While Kakenya’s Dream and PEAS taught Life Skills in schools owned or managed by them, the Life Skills Education curriculum offered by Camfed in Tanzania “has been absorbed in the regular school curriculum and timetabled in the official school day” (Center for International Development & Training, 2017). The three other organizations, namely Komo, Luigi and Trailblazers had formalized Life Skills lesson but delivered outside the formal classroom.

Mentoring: This intervention was used most frequently for nurturing Life Skills across the three countries. Seventy-five percent of the organizations offered mentoring either as a standalone initiative or embedded in other programs. For example, mentoring was a core component of the Trailblazers Mentorship Foundation’s strategy for supporting adolescent girls to complete their education as well as reduce their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, child marriage and violence. The mentorship program was delivered with the support of women role models and grandmothers within the communities. Each of these mentors

was assigned a total of 20 girls to mentor. Mentorship was also the focus of the two programs offered by AfricAid.

For those organizations offering sponsorships, mentoring of the beneficiaries was key. For example, KaKenya's Dream provided mentorship to their former students who had graduated from their school and were being sponsored to attend secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Mentors included a variety of individuals. Either they were teachers specifically assigned the task, or they could be respected adults identified from the local communities. The "School Mothers" designated by AET is a good example of the latter. University students from the intervention communities were enlisted by APHRC to mentor and provide homework support to adolescent girls in informal settlements.

In interventions implemented by KCDF, WERK, KaKenya's Dream, AfricAid and Camfed, alumnae played an important role in mentoring learners. The Camfed's Learner Guide Program has been particularly successful and internationally recognized as a good practice. Through this initiative, school graduates who are young women return to their local schools, support marginalized children in their studies, and deliver a Life Skills and well-being program to complement the academic curriculum. The Learner Guide Program was developed and rolled out with CAMA, which is Camfed's alumnae network. (Camfed, 2017)

Clubs: Led by learners, clubs are considered to be effective channels for developing Life Skills, especially skills related to Leadership, Confidence-Building and Self-Esteem. They are platforms for reaching out to young people with information and support by their peers, adult role models and mentors. The study found 44 percent of the sampled organizations were using clubs as channels for the teaching of Life Skills. The type of club varied from one organization to another. They included student business clubs (Educate!), girls and livelihood clubs (PEAS), ICT and Enterprise clubs (AET); and STEM and Tuseme (Kiswahili for 'speak out') clubs (MZF), Book Club (KaKenya's Dream) and the Do-It-Yourself Club (KLC).

Adolescent Capacity Development: Almost two-thirds of the organizations offered what they described as Leadership and Life Skills training for adolescents. The trainings took place during school term, through clubs or mentoring sessions, after school hours or weekends, and in two instances, over the holidays in what informants referred to as camps.

Adult Capacity Development: Almost 70 percent of the sampled organizations supported capacity development of adults to support the teaching and nurturing of Life Skills. The adults targeted by the various interventions included teachers, school administrators and management board members, as well as parents and community members, like "school mothers".

Community-based Interventions. Through community-based interventions, Life Skills were developed in out-of-school youth to complement training in work readiness, entrepreneurship and a variety of vocational skills. Less than a third of the organizations had Life Skills interventions targeting the out-of-school adolescents and youth.

Intervention Modalities

Life Skills interventions are delivered through different modalities categorized in Table 8 as:

- **Direct Targeting of Adolescents**, which refers to direct work with or capacity development of adolescents.
- **Intermediate Models** that include working with teachers and other stakeholders to reach out to adolescents.
- **Cascade Models** involves delivery of training through layers of trainers until it reaches the final target group, in this case the adolescents.

In our sample, almost all the organizations reached out to their target groups directly through Life Skills interventions. The primary targets were in-school learners and alumnae as well as out-of-school adolescents and youth.

Table 4: Status of Life Skills Education in Kenya and Uganda

	Direct Targeting of Adolescents	Intermediate Models	Cascade
AfricAid			
AET			
APHRC			
Camfed			
Educate!			
KaKenya's Dream			
KCDF			
KLC			
KTO			
LGIHE			
LISP			
MZF			
PEAS			
TMF			
WERK			
ZiziAfrique	Not applicable – Project Design in Preparatory Phase		

In some interventions, the capacity of teachers, members of school management boards, parents and even community members were developed to enable them to perform their roles better in supporting the project implementation. There were notable exceptions. For example, KTO implemented their Life Skills interventions indirectly through the Folk Development Colleges with teachers taking the responsibility for teaching and implementation. In one of four interventions, WERK provided support to the Ministry of Education and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to revise its Life Skills Education manual for trainers, with plans in place for training them using a cascade model. The aim of this intervention is to build the capacity of teachers to teach Life Skills Education to learners in schools and non-formal education centers that had re-enrolled out-of-school adolescents, including young mothers, as part of a back-to-school campaign. In Camfed's cascade model, young women who are CAMA members are trained as Core Trainers to provide training and support to Learners' Guides.

For LGIHE, the teacher trainees were the main targets though their ultimate goal was to reach the learners in school. For example, they were working on developing methods for fostering the growth of these Life Skills like Creativity and Critical thinking within the youth through the teaching subjects. Explained a key informant: “Like if I am teaching English, I apply the kind of methodologies that foster the growth of the ability to compare the text; the ability to critically think about the text to express your own views about the text; to understand the text. We teach the teaching of these skills”.

Teaching and Learning Life Skills

Life Skills Education is sometimes defined as a “methodology for helping children and adolescents to cope with their situation, develop problem-solving and decision-making skills, and evaluate risk and respond appropriately”. (UNICEF, 2006) To be “successful”, it needs to “adopt interactive, responsive, and participatory methods that challenge young people to find new ways of relating to one another”. (UNESCO, 2012) This is true of any Life Skills program.

The study revealed the promotion of active learning methods both in and out of the classroom — the importance of learning through doing. For example, Educate! uses skills lab as a method of delivering lessons in a more active, student-focused way, moving away from the conventional talk-and-chalk methods of teaching. According to an informant, it encourages students to engage more with the course materials, and “is kind of the way to make their teaching more competence-focused and more skills-focused”. Through Build, Practice and Present, the teacher is allocated 20 percent of the time to use interactive methods to introduce knowledge, while the student has 80 percent of the time to interact with the knowledge and work on the learning activities, and then present their work to their peers who get an opportunity to critique it and the teacher gives feedback.

In many of the interventions experiential methods were emphasized. For example, the KLC’s Do-It-Yourself Club is a youth led project. It involves secondary school students taking the lead in developing the programs themselves: they conduct needs assessment, design the projects they want and evaluate them.

Other active, learner-friendly teaching-learning methods that emerged from a review of the Life Skills interventions were:

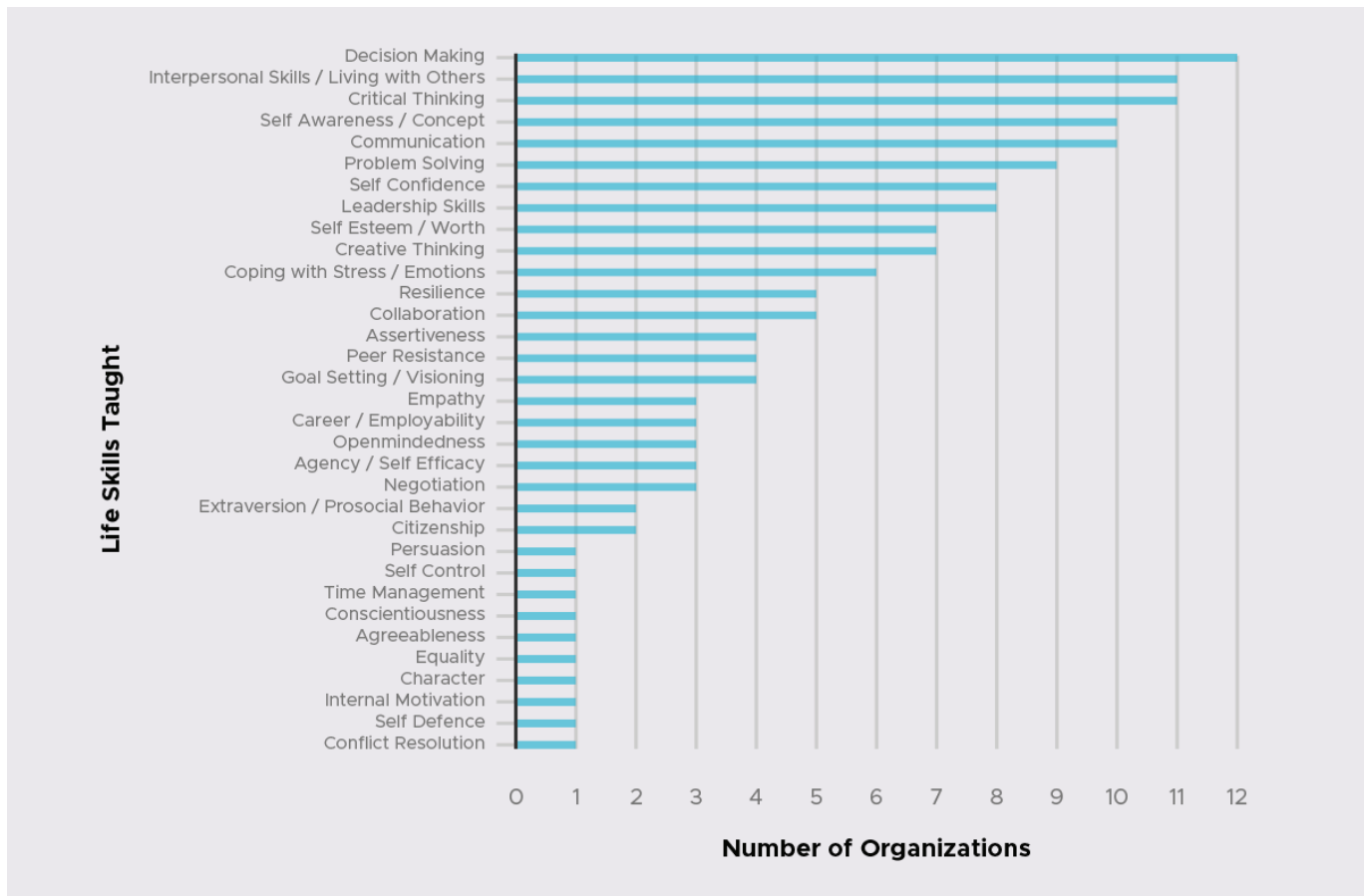
- Peer learning
- Workshops, focus group discussions, facilitated learning sessions
- Community service
- Reading books (through book club) and analyzing them
- Testimonies, case studies, videos and animations
- Role modeling and motivational talks
- Competitions

Among all the interventions, only KTO used sports as a method for teaching Life Skills. This program, called ‘mpira ni nafasi’ in Kiswahili translated as ‘football is opportunity’, focused on empowering girls economically and socially. It was perceived as nurturing Self-Confidence and Self-esteem in adolescents in addition to developing talents and equipping them with employable skills (as sports management teachers, referees and footballers).

Prioritization of Life Skills

A scan of the interview transcripts and relevant program documents revealed the frequency of mention of Life Skills that were emphasized and taught across the sampled organizations. The findings of the scan are graphically presented in Figure 5. The skills are listed from least mentioned (once) to most mentioned (12 out of possible 16 times).

Figure 5: Frequency Count of Life Skills Prioritized by CSOs



As the Figure indicates, the Life Skills emphasized by the sampled organizations were many and diverse. The graph lists 34. However, the actual number of Life Skills mentioned was more than 40; in the list, similar Life Skills or those that were closely related were counted as one. Among those clustered together were: Interpersonal Skills, Healthy Relationships and Living with Others; Self Awareness and Self Concept; Coping with Stress and Coping with Emotions; Self-Esteem and Self-Worth; Resilience, Grit and Persistence; Creative-Thinking, Lateral-Thinking, Imagination and Innovation; and Career and Workforce Readiness, Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills.

Decision-Making emerged as the most highly valued with 12 organizations prioritizing it, followed by Interpersonal Skills and Critical-Thinking, each prioritized by 11 organizations; Effective Communication and Self-Awareness each by 10 organizations; Problem-Solving by 9 organizations; and Self-Confidence and Leadership by 8 of them.

These eight top priority skills, emphasized by at least 50 percent of the organizations, may be categorized using the formal Life Skills Education curriculum framework in East Africa described in Chapter 3. They included skills relating to “Knowing and Living with Oneself” (that is, Self-Awareness/Self-Concept, Self-

Confidence); Living with Others (Interpersonal, Effective Communication) and what is often referred to as the “Higher Order Thinking” (HOT) Skills (Decision-Making, Critical-Thinking and Problem-Solving).

More than 4 out of 10 organizations also prioritized Creative-Thinking (combined with Lateral Thinking/Imagination) and Self Esteem/Self Worth. The former is part of the HOT family while the latter tends to be classified under the Life Skills cluster: “Knowing and Living with Oneself”.

Some of the Life Skills listed, such as Leadership, Employability and Interpersonal Skills may be referred to as composite. For example, in some Life Skills frameworks, Effective Communication, Negotiation, Empathy and Teamwork are all categorized as Interpersonal Skills (UNICEF 2010). Leadership Skills include Interpersonal Skills (inclusive of Communication), Self-Confidence, Empathy, Creativity, Decision-Making and Problem-Solving among others. The Education Development Center (EDC) considers Communication, Interpersonal Skills, dependability and hard work as key work readiness skills. Sidle’s definition of what she terms Agentic Capacity includes skills such as Self-Confidence and Self Esteem grouped under Positive Self-Perception and Decision-Making, Communication Skills and Self Awareness clustered under Agency Skills among others (Sidle, 2019). Kwauk and Braga (2017) define girl’s Agency as her capacity to see and to make choices (www.brookings.edu/blog/research). While only three organizations listed Agency as a priority Life Skill, many of the skills associated with it were emphasized across the interventions.

The Life Skills prioritized across the interventions were largely aligned to the three categories of Life Skills singled out in the frameworks promoted by the UN agencies through the curriculum development centers/ministries of education. To recapitulate, the three categories were Knowing and Living with Oneself; Knowing and Living with Others; and Effective Decision-Making. In the case of Educate!, their priority Life Skills were similar to the 6Cs as previously noted. However, what emerges from the interviews is that the prioritization of the specific Life Skills often took place through consultative processes with various stakeholders, including young people themselves; needs assessments; desk reviews and experiential knowledge. Ultimately, the emphasized Life Skills reflected their organizational goals and intervention objectives.

Gender and Life Skills

Life Skills Emphasized by Gender. In a 2017 study, the LGIHE found boys in Ugandan secondary schools were significantly better than girls in most of the Life Skills that they assessed. From the data presented in their report, gender gaps were most visible in Assertiveness, Achievement Striving, Teamwork and Self-Esteem. There were also significant gaps in Problem-Solving, Grit (Consistency and Perseverance) and Empathy among other skills. Key informants from other sampled organizations reported similar gaps both in and outside classrooms. For example, WERK, basing their conclusions on qualitative evaluations of the UK’s Department for International Development supported Girls Education Challenge program (Phase 1) in Kenya observed that, “boys started with an upper hand”. This, they contended, was “a cross cutting similarity across counties that boys would not shy off from asking questions in class whereas the converse for girls.” Others highlighted the inability of girls to Say No, resulting in sexual abuse, early pregnancy and forced marriage, triggering negative consequences for girls’ education and career opportunities. Informants linked this to gender socialization that began in the early years and continued through adolescence at home, community, school and the workplace. They recognized the existence of gender discriminatory beliefs and practices, including stereotyping that not only influenced girls’ behavior, relationships and life choices, but the way teachers interacted with them in the classroom. Several organizations, like Educate!, PEAS, Camfed and WERK among others had well-articulated gender strategies that addressed key barriers to girls success in and out-of-school.

The broad consensus was that though both girls and boys needed exposure to a range of Life Skills, girls required an extra push, an additional exposure to specific Life Skills because the playing field was not level.

Table 9 highlights the Life Skills informants felt needed to be emphasized more for girls.

Table 9: Life Skills More Emphasized for Girls

	Assertiveness	To Say No	Self-Awareness	Self-Confidence	Self-Esteem	Communication	Negotiation	Problem Solving	Resilience/Grit	Leadership
AET				Green						Red
AfricAid									Yellow	Red
APHRC			Brown		Grey	Blue				
Camfed					Grey					
Educate!				Green		Blue	Dark Grey			Red
KaKenya's Dream						Blue	Dark Grey			Red
KCDF	Orange	Teal	Brown	Green						
KTO				Green	Grey					
LGIHE				Green	Grey			Orange	Yellow	
LISP	Orange	Teal		Green		Blue				
MZF				Green						
PEAS				Green	Grey	Blue		Orange		
TMF	Orange	Teal								Red
WERK				Green	Grey		Dark Grey	Orange	Yellow	
% (n=15)	20.00	20.00	13.33	60.00	40.00	33.33	20.00	20.00	20.00	33.33

There were notable exceptions. ZiziAfrique maintained that Life Skills were required by both genders equally. At KLC, boys and girls were exposed to the same set of Life Skills in equal doses. Argued an informant, girls and boys in low performing public schools where they worked “lack exposure to so many things that don’t build their Confidence and Self-Esteem”. However, he did not rule out more emphasis on girls as the intervention matures beyond the first year of its existence.

There was divided opinion within two organizations—one from Kenya and the other from Uganda—on whether it was the socio-economic status/location or gender that accounted for the low self-esteem and the lack of confidence among learners. Those who took the position that “it is not about gender” were both male, while informants who recognized that gender matters were female. The Life Skills emphasized for girls by these two female informants are reflected in Table 9.

Gender Focus of Life Skills Interventions: Of the 16 sampled organizations, seven had girls’ only focused interventions. These included AET’s School Mothers’ initiative, AfricAid’s Kisa and Binti Shupavu projects, Camfed’s Learners’ Guides, KTO’s Women’s Football Development Program and Mama Course initiative (renamed Skills Development Program), KaKenya’s Dream’s Center of Excellence and Scholars programs, KCDF’s Scholars’ program and Milele’s STEM.

Some of the organizations with girls’ only focus (AET, Camfed, KaKenya’s Dream, KCDF and Milele) had other

interventions through which they reached out to boys. As Table 10 reveals, over half of the organizations involved boys, though girls remained the primary targets of their Life Skills interventions. On unpacking this category, two implementation models stand out

- **Girls and boys targeted together within the same learning space.** For instance, boys participated together with girls in AET's, PEAS' and the TMF Girls Clubs, both of which were girl-led initiatives. Both genders had exposure to the Camfed My Better World (MBW) curriculum facilitated by the Learners' Guides in school.
- **Single gender scenes in which girls and boys were segregated.** A good example of this is the APHRC leadership initiative: girls and boys were trained in gender-segregated spaces using gender specific manuals that were developed as part of the intervention. Similarly, the training on health and leadership offered by KaKenya's Dream separated girls from boys. Moreover, girls were trained over two days on issues of sexual and reproductive health while boys received one day of training in the camps.

Table 10: Type of Organization by Program Focus

	Girls - Only Interventions	Girl Focus but Involves Boys	Addresses Special Needs of Girls	Aims at Gender Balance	Boys Only
AET					
AfricAid					
APHRC					
Cemfed					
Educate!					
KaKenya's Dream					
KCDF					
KLC					
KTO					
LGIHE					
LISP					
MZF					
PEAS					
TMF					
WERK					
ZiziAfrique					
% of Total (n=16)	43.75	56.25	18.75	31.25	6.25

Some organizations promoted common spaces where girls and boys interacted and learned together. For example, while recognizing the greater disadvantage of girls, LGIHE believed the best strategy to achieve gender equality was through allowing them to discuss and debate issues together, so that each would understand the perspectives of the other.

Educate! is currently in the process of developing a girls' empowerment strategy. However, according to a key informant, they already integrate gender sensitive training and sensitization on gender responsive pedagogy into their programs. They train mentors, teachers and administrators to identify gender stereotypes faced by students and assist in the creation of strategies for empowering both girls and boys equally in the classroom. Results from randomized controlled trial found that the Educate! model has a larger relative impact on girls as compared to boys. (www.experienceeducate.org)

The Komo training content targeting youth incorporated gender responsive topics such as gender and sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health. At the time of the interview, ZiziAfrique was waiting for results from three national research studies focusing on out-of-school youth, TVET institutions, and working youth that they had commissioned. The findings of the studies will inform the design of the Ujana360 program, including its gender dimensions.

The study revealed a broad understanding of the link between gender discrimination, gender-based violence, gender stereotyping and early gender socialization, and the greater disadvantage of girls at home, community, school and the workplace. Many were already addressing these barriers through their programs and the Life Skills interventions. However, gender bias was clear in comments made by at least three of the informants, coincidentally all male. In two instances, they disagreed with their female colleagues, arguing that it was location (rural, remote) and low socio-economic status that accounted for lower Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem, not gender. A third male informant neither recognized gender stereotypes nor saw the significance of critically addressing gender typing of careers beyond "advising" girls and boys on possible career options.

Perceived Impact of Life Skills on Girls: Overall, informants perceived Life Skills interventions to have positive impact on girls. Sometimes, however, they noted resistance towards "empowered" girls. The resistance was reflected in teacher-learner interactions in the classroom and from parents when they returned home from school. According to one informant,

“Others think Life Skills is a way of spoiling their children and think a child who is confident, articulates issues, and speaks out is a disobedient child. So, there is that challenge with the community, and the teachers as well. They look at a confident girl, an empowered girl as disobedient.”

Another informant alleged that some female teachers accuse girls participating in the Life Skills interventions that they were supporting as "rude". "We try to press on this a little bit; what does that mean being rude? But what we have heard is that they speak in class more and they disagree with the teachers and that is considered being rude".

Informants attributed such negative perceptions to dominant patriarchal social-cultural norms and practices. The gender norms intersected with values of gerontocratic societies, where girls' voices were not expected to be heard, and certainly not to be used to challenge adults (teachers and parents).

The Rationale for Involving Boys: Organizations justified the inclusion of boys as beneficiaries in their Life Skills interventions, arguing that

- Empowering girls in isolation was dangerous and could undo gains in their favor
- Targeting both promotes mutual understanding as each gender gets to hear the others perspective
- Boys who are empowered support and protect girls from sexual and gender-based violence
- Boys become champions of positive change and gender equality.

Survey Findings

The findings of the on-line survey have been summarized in Annex D. Much of the language used in the questionnaire was not commonly used in the East Africa region. During the in-depth interviews, the informants did not mention the majority of the Life Skills as phrased in the questionnaire even once. Further to that, in the questionnaire, some of the items were included under more than one of the six broad Life Skills categories or constructs, making triangulation with other data sources problematic. There needs to be shared understanding of selected Life Skills terminology if their impact on adolescents are to be effectively measured.

05

Co-Creating Assessment Tools: Is there a Need?

Co-Creating Assessment Tools: Is there a Need?	38.
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	38.
Assessment Tools	39.
Perceived Viability of Co-Creation	42.
Willingness to Participate	42.
Challenges of Co-creation and Validation of Tools	44.
Participants Perspectives Recommendations	45.

Co-Creating Assessment Tools: Is there a Need?

The education systems of East Africa, like in other parts of the world, are still grappling with assessing Life Skills two decades after Jomtien. The contextual nature of Life Skills makes it difficult to achieve consensus on the most effective method of assessing Life Skills or how they can be measured. This chapter provides a brief overview of the practice of monitoring, evaluation and learning by the sampled organizations, and explores the viability of co-creating an assessment tool, or a set of assessment tools for determining the impact of Life Skills programs on adolescents, especially girls. It concludes that some challenges notwithstanding, the notion of co-creation of a set of assessment tools is viable and the majority of those interviewed are willing to participate in the process.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The monitoring and evaluation cultures and practices of the sampled organizations varied, ranging from strong to weak. On one end of the spectrum, there were those who did not have designated, qualified and experienced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff. On the other end of the spectrum, there were others with strong departments focused on M&E, headed by senior officers who had embraced learning cultures and were open to sharing with others insights from their experiences and research. In between these two extremes were organizations that had M&E officers but linked to specific projects and programs rather than at the organizational level. Regardless of where they lay on the spectrum, the measurement of Life Skills and assessing impact was perceived to be a challenge. It was perceived to be still in its infancy, with many organizations still on the learning curve. In the public sector, there was no formal mechanism to assess the impact of Life Skills Education in schools; while offered on the official school and college timetable in all three countries, the national examination boards no longer examined them.

The study found that the various Life Skills interventions and programs supported by the sampled organizations were at different stages of implementation. ZiziAfrique's Ujana360 was in its design phase; it had commissioned different firms to undertake research studies to inform their programming in the field of Life Skills and TVET. The Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education was also engaged in research of relevance to Life Skills. For example, the purpose of their study conducted in secondary schools was to develop an assessment tool that would give the key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, a clearer picture of students' learning outcomes, especially in Life Skills (LGIHE, 2017).

Many of the participating organizations had baseline reports for their programs but were yet to conduct mid-line and end-line evaluations and post-end-line assessments, depending on where they were at in their project cycle. The evaluation studies tended to use mixed methods approach to collect data, though as in the case of the UK Department for International Development supported Girls Education Challenge program in Kenya and Tanzania, separate qualitative studies were also conducted. A listing of the available program evaluation and impact assessment studies has been included in the Bibliography of this report.

It is important to note that the majority of organizations that participated in the scoping study have utilized the findings of their monitoring and evaluation reports to make adjustments in the intervention designs or use these to inform future programs. As discussed in the previous chapter, over half of the interventions and programs focusing on girls had expanded their scope to involve boys as beneficiaries.

Assessment Tools

During the course of the interviews, informants identified assessment tools that they use in their programs to measure Life Skills. These are categorized by type as presented in Table 11. Additional information was extracted from relevant documents where available. The study found the most common tools in use to be rating scales and questionnaires. Within this broad category were self-reporting/rating scales as well as reporting/rating by others.

The list presented is not comprehensive, however. Some informants talked of using qualitative tools but did not elaborate on them. However, at least three informants from different organizations expressed preference for qualitative assessments, maintaining that these were more sensitive to context and reduced biases common in self-reporting quantitative tools.

Table 11: Life Skills Assessment Tools by Categories

	Rating Scales/ Questionnaires	Observations checklists	Rubric	Portfolio	Performance Assessments	Logs/Records	Vignettes	Qualitative
AfricAid								
AET								
APHRC								
Camfed								
Educate!								
KaKenya's Dream								
KCDF								
KLC								
KTO								
LGIHE								
LISP								
MZF								
PEAS								
TMF								
WERK								
ZiziAfrique								
% (n=16)	75.00	25.00	25.00	6.25	18.75	18.75	18.75	37.50

Consistent with the findings of the RELI Uganda report (2018), we found very few organizations had adapted existing tools developed internationally. The Komo Learning Centers was among the few; they used the Youth Power Positive Youth Development Measurement Tool Kit to develop their M&E framework and assessment tools. A number of organizations such as Zizi, Luigi and Komo were in the process of piloting or testing some tools at the time the interviews took place. AfricAid commissioned an American psychologist to help them develop the Resilience Competency Tool. The Women Educational Researchers of Kenya had adapted a tool developed by APHRC for their Opportunity Schools Program.

We found examples of tools, which had been developed in collaboration with other organizations, not always with the desired result. The Camfed’s partnership with the Psychometric Center at the University of Cambridge to develop a tool to assess well-being is a case in point. The tool was problematic to implement as the more girls learned about the dimensions of well-being the more critically they were likely to rate themselves. Consequently, Camfed switched to a tool to measure well-being developed under the Girls’ Education Challenge. Similarly, Mango Tree, a Uganda-based company, helped PEAS to develop a Life Skills rubric. Though a comprehensive tool, teachers found it time-consuming. Now the tool is only being used to test cognitive aspects. The Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation, however, has been using a monitoring tool that was co-created with the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports taking the lead. Table 12 provides more details.

Table 12: Description of Assessment Tools by Organization

Tool Name	Tool Type	Target	User	Description
AET STEM classroom observation tool	Observation Checklist	Teachers	Super-visor	Teachers who are trained are observed in class and are given feedback on how they performed and where they can improve.
AET School Mother Mentorship Log	Log/Record	School Mothers ??? mentors	Teach-ers	Helps to track how often the school mother is able to talk to or mentor girls both in school and out of school.
AET Transferable Skills Rubric	Rubric	Learners	Teach-ers	Measures skills demonstrated like communication, critical thinking and creative thinking. Teachers track students during their lessons and rate them according to if a student is emerging or capable or developing for instance in speaking. Teachers find it difficult to use the tool.
AfricAid Resilience Competency Tool	Rating Scale	Learners	Self Admin-istered	Measures resilience quantitatively. It has 20 items rated on a Likert Scale (Never True to Always True corresponding to 0 to 4). Taken at baseline and end-line, scholars rate their level of agreement with statements regarding their confidence and an aggregated score demonstrates their resiliency. A score of 80 perfectly resilient; below 40 not so good.
AfricAid Scholars Survey	Survey Ques-tionnaire	Learners	Self Admin-istered	Taken at baseline, end-line and post end-line, for the program targeting older girls, made possible because of a strong alumnae network.
APHRC Individual Behavior & Life Skills Questionnaire	Ques-tion-naire	Learners	Self Admin-istered	This uses different indicators and modules to measure Life Skills.
Camfed Instrument to Assess Well-being	Rating scale	Learners		Comprise 4 scales based on ideas of well being defined by Camfed’s program of activity. Includes self-efficacy (degree of confidence in abilities to engage in behaviors described in Camfed’s well-being training materials) and self-awareness among other items
Educate! Secondary School Assessment Tool (SSAT)		Learners	Self Admin-istered	Used to measure grit, teamwork and budgeting. The selection of skills to measure was based on 80 hours of interviews with youth. It was put on hold in 2018 and is yet to be finalized because of some challenges.

Educate! Portfolio Assessment	Portfolio	Learners	Teachers	To help teachers integrate continuous skills measurement into grading and assessment system. In pilot phase, it assesses learners' skills development through practical assignments that teachers give to them at the end of a skills lab. It requires learners to apply skills that they have learnt or practiced in their classroom to essentially a homework assignment. They are given tasks that allow them to go out, probably do it from home after class and relate what happens in the real world.
Educate! Exit Slip	Performance Assessment/ Direct Assessment	Learners	Teachers	An Exit Slip is a quick way to learn about what students have learned in a lesson. Small piece of paper the size of the business card that you could use to write some prompts on; students just write answers on it. Like what skills have you learnt from today's lesson?
KLC Do-It-Yourself Positive Youth Development Measurement Tool Kit	Self-Report Questionnaire	Club Members	Teachers	This is an adaptation of Positive Youth Development Toolkit developed by Youth Power funded by USAID. It is in pilot stage. The tool covers selected domains (e.g. communication, participation, agency etc.). There are questions under each domain
LGIHE Soft Skills Measurement Tool	Rating Scale	Learners	Self Administered	Based on the identified and classified demand-led life skills as expressed by employers and other stakeholders. It focuses on 5 domains: Openness to experience, emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion. The tool also captured information on the home factors that influenced the acquisition of life skills among lower secondary schools in Uganda.
LGIHE Rubric	Rubric	Learners	Self Administered	Assessment of the youth by the mentor. On process of developing two tools. 1) For students themselves on self-reported items that will have case scenarios where the children put themselves in the shoes of youth with challenges. 2) A rubric developed for the assessment of the youth by the mentor while they are working in the industry.
Life Skills Promoters Experiential Assessment Tool	Direct Assessment/ Observation	Trainees	Mentors	Trainees are assessed using this tool for their ability to apply generic Life Skills in real life situations. For example, they may be asked to identify a community problem they can address using different Life Skills like Empathy, Interpersonal Skills, Critical Thinking and Decision-Making.
PEAS Rubric to Assess Life Skills	Rubric/Multiple Assessments	Learners	Facilitators	This tool enables scoring students based on the program's Life Skills objectives. It is used to score students Life Skills Journals, debate performance and in-class participation. It has scoring criteria and assigns points -1,2,or 3 - based upon how well students meet those criteria. The criteria are grouped into categories so the teacher can easily track performance. However, the teachers find it complex and time consuming to use. It is therefore used to measure only the cognitive dimensions.
PEAS KWD Chart	Direct Assessment	Learners	Teachers	This is a practice in Life Skills Education when teachers are introducing a lesson. The K stands for what students already know, students write in their books. If, for example, a teacher is introducing a topic in relationship, so the teacher will ask: 'What do they know about relationship?' So that is the 'K'. Then the W is, 'What do you want to know?' More like trying to gauge their expectations and then at the end of the lesson the 'D' is more about the behavioral change: 'What are you going to do differently based on what you have learnt today? That is mainly the in-class assessment and also questions within the general attitudes that students respond to. Then the teacher mark.
Trailblazers Mentoring "Signs"	Self-Report Questionnaire	Club Members	Club Members	It consists of simple indicators referred to as "signs" to identify key actions that are taken as a result of project intervention. The tools helps in collection of signs of change resulting from knowledge acquired from the capacity-building trainings on Life Skills, mentoring and other observations.
WERK Mentorship Questionnaire	Rating Scale	Female Learners	Self-Administered	This uses a Likert Scale to assess statements on Life Skills related issues.
ZiziAfrique Life Skills Assessment Tool	Rubric			Still in pilot stage, it focuses on four broad categories of values and Life Skills, namely Values, Intrapersonal skills, Interpersonal skills, Decision-making. A test panel comprising professionals from KICD, KNEC, TVETA and other experts developed the tool. It targets youth aged 18 -25. It has been integrated into 3 on-going research studies targeting youth

Perceived Viability of Co-Creation

The perspectives on the viability of co-creation of tools or set of tools may be summarized into two categories (Figure 6):

1. There were those -- the majority (75%) -- who felt there was a need for tools that would effectively assess the impact of Life Skills interventions on adolescents.
2. A smaller number of informants maintained their organizations (25%) already had tools and systems in place to measure impact. They therefore did not feel the need for the co-creation of additional tools for their programs. They did, however, identify specific issues around which co-creation of tools may be viable.

Figure 6: CSO Opinion on Viability of Co-Creation

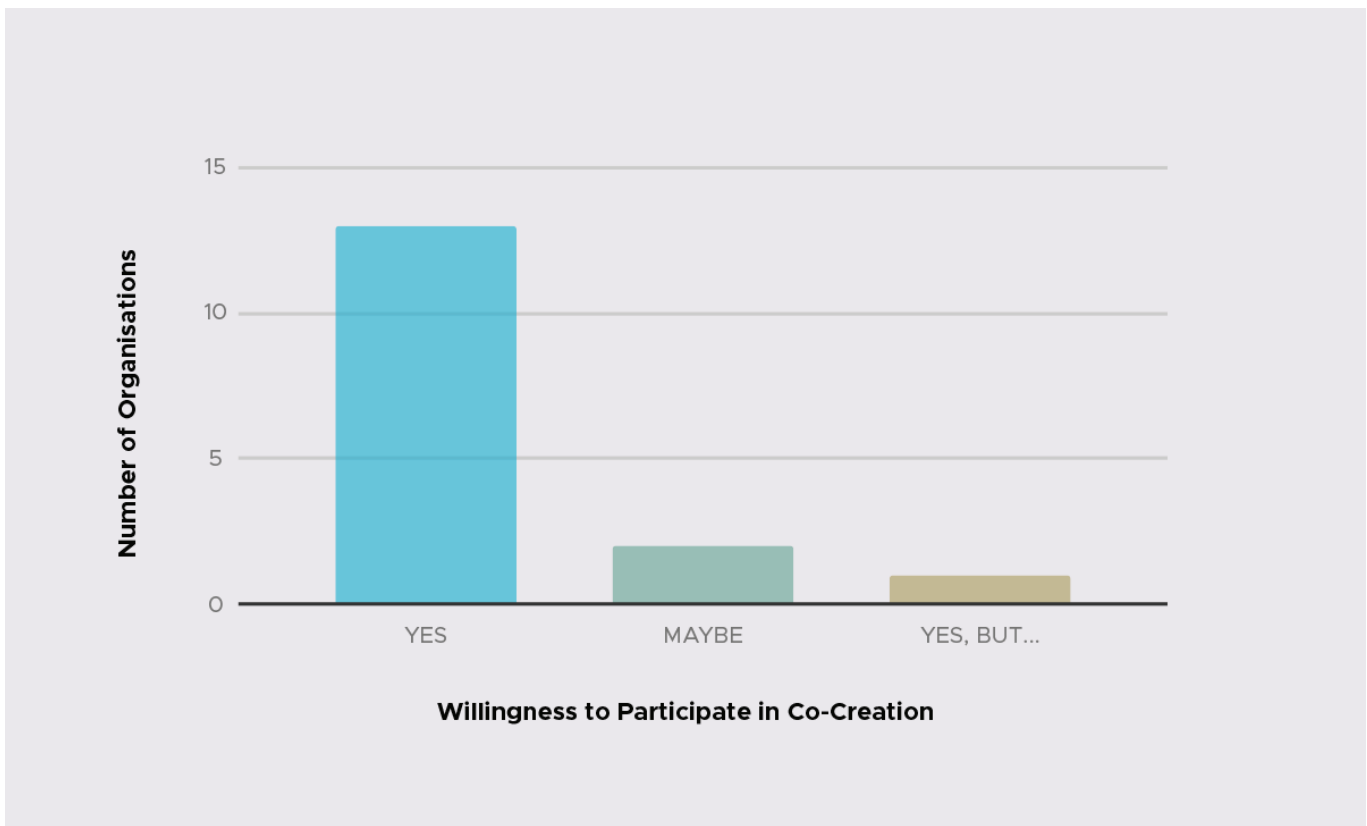


Willingness to Participate

Over 80 percent of the sampled organizations expressed interest in participating in the co-creation of assessment tools. They reasoned that the co-creation process would bring benefits to them in multiple ways. According to key informants, networking opportunities would increase, collaboration between the various organizations would strengthen and impact would grow beyond one’s own network. Working together, they would have greater outreach. Similarly, making the tool open source would increase access for other CSOs to measure and assess the impact of their Life Skills interventions. One organization voiced their willingness to be involved in the process at any stage depending on whether they were “a good fit and had the skill”, pointing out they had “some ideas on how to approach the process in a productive way”, and “some great experience in figuring out exactly on how to assess and what to assess”.

Based on an assessment of their comparative strength, another informant proposed that his organization was better suited to take on the role of convener but did not presently have the capacity to provide the technical leadership. “We are not experts”, he pointed out, “and we do not want to become an expert institution of assessment”.

Figure 7: Willingness of Organizations to Participate



While Figure 7 shows that the majority of organizations were willing to participate in the co-creation process, it also reveals that some — albeit a small minority — were either not sure, or made it clear that they would participate only if certain conditions were met.

An explanation for the high number of affirmative responses correlates with the perceived need of co-creating assessment tools. An outlier view was that some organizations were driven to express willingness to participate in the co-creation process in anticipation of receiving financial support from the funding agency. Two of the organizations, including the one cited above, maintained that they had “sufficient” assessment tools for their program needs. They also hinted that the co-creation of additional tools might be a donor agenda, imposed externally and not a response to their felt needs, serving to divert valuable staff time away from actual program implementation.

The “Yes, but” category in Figure 7 captures the perspective of an informant who may have misunderstood what a co-creation process entails. The informant, who expressed willingness to co-create, believed that the role of participants would be to review, refine and contextualize any draft assessment framework presented by an external expert. Based on the available data, we cannot determine how different organizations understood “co-creation” or whether this was an exceptional view.

Challenges of Co-creation and Validation of Tools

A majority of informants thought the idea of co-creation of tools was viable, and were willing to participate in the process. Nonetheless, they pointed out six sets of challenges. These revolved around issues of conceptualization; capacity; ownership; ethics; relevance and competing priorities.

Conceptual challenges. As discussed in the previous chapter, there was significant divergence of views on the understanding of Life Skills and which specific Life Skills should be prioritized, across which sectors and contexts. At the RELI Life Skills and Values meeting attended by the researcher in Kenya, this divergence in views emerged clearly. A lack of consensus on these very fundamental issues could pose challenges to the co-creation and validation of assessment tools, as one informant pointed out. The lack of consensus was reflected in the different ways Life Skills was conceptualized and understood. Further, misunderstanding of what the concept of “co-creation” means, and what the process entails, was identified as one of the biggest hindrances to effective outcomes.

Capacity. Capacity challenges emerged as an issue from the interviews, RELI literature and informal observations of the researcher. Capacity deficits were highlighted with regard to the ability of the teachers to teach, plan their lessons and assess Life Skills. These deficits were linked to the pedagogical competencies to nurture Life Skills, and integration of the skills in teacher or instructor behavior and practice. Informants noted the financial costs related to the retraining of teachers and reskilling of TVET instructors.

A concern was raised that should the persons administering the tool not have expertise to administer it, the results could be compromised and become a major problem.

Concerns were also raised with the capacity of implementing organizations to assess and evaluate Life Skills interventions. The RELI Uganda report (2018) flagged limited human (and other) resources to nurture, assess and provide feedback on Life Skills. Contributing to the capacity challenges was the crossover of qualified and experienced M&E staff from one partner organization to another, looking for greener pastures. For example, at the RELI Life Skills and Values working group meeting, at least two organizations remained unrepresented because of recruitment by other member organizations in the network.

Ownership. It was perceived that the process, which was externally driven, weakened ownership of the process and outputs at multiple levels. First, there was the view that donors tended to impose their agenda without reference to the needs of the grantees. Second, there was a perspective that experts from outside the continent drove the co-creation process, which was funded by external philanthropic agencies at the expense of local African expertise. Third, it was observed that tools developed externally, imposed on teachers could slow down uptake of the tools by them.

Ethics. The lack of trust among organizations, even within the same networks, was identified as a major challenge. It was pointed out that some organizations tended to be overprotective of their tools and frameworks and were reluctant to share and learn from one another. One informant alleged that some organizations “hid information” from others.

Relevance. Given the diversity within and across countries and sectors, contextualizing tools to local contexts was perceived to be a critical challenge. Informants cautioned that tools and frameworks imported from western countries could be ineffective, as would assessment tools that were not sensitive to the differences in thematic focus of programs and projects even within the same organizations.

Concern was expressed with regard to possible misinterpretation of questions due to cultural and language differences between various target communities. This issue was also highlighted in the Kenya RELI Values and Life Skills workshop report (October 2018). Additionally, the language used in some of the existing tools was perceived to be difficult for the target group and/or the purpose for which it was designed.

Questions were raised on what kind of tools — quantitative or qualitative — would work best in measuring Life Skills in particular contexts. While informants from at least three organizations personally found qualitative tools to be more appropriate for their contexts, there was no consensus on this issue. In the opinion of one informant, qualitative measures can counter maneuvering self-reporting assessments, but the challenge is that it takes time before impact is seen. There was a question about the girl-sensitivity of existing tools.

Competing priorities. Informants from one organization expressed concern that there were too many funders working on the same issue of co-creation of tools at the same time. They listed at least four (inclusive of Echidna Giving) that had approached them in the recent past on the issue of co-creation of assessment tools. For small organizations this was a challenge as it took them away from their core tasks, including teaching time and assessing what they would like to as an organization.

The challenge of competing priorities was also raised in relation to teachers' workloads. An informant described designing tools that "are about what teachers are already plugged into but not adding more to their plate" as one of the main challenges "because if you are adding more to their plate, they don't have the time".

Participants Perspectives – Recommendations

During the course of the interviews, informants made a number of recommendations based on what kind of assessment tools and processes they felt were needed and what were not needed. The recommendations, as summarized in Table 13, reflect the voices of the informants and do not necessarily represent the views of the researchers.

Table 13: Summary Recommendations by Research Participants

WHAT IS NEEDED
Indicators of measurement
Tool targeting special needs of adolescent girls
Tool for looking at employable skills targeting youth
Standardized assessment tool that is flexible enough to address relevance in different contexts, is learner sensitive; reduces costs
Tool to quantify economic impact on adolescents
Measuring different programs on same scale to determine differences in impact, "same metrics across different organizations"
Use a tool so that "even the results would be a little bit more comparable" for "regional evaluation"
Tools that help teachers assess where students are, easy to use, easy to analyze
Set of tools rather than one common tool to address different target groups and contexts (e.g. refugees)
Assistance with "fine-tuning" of existing tools
Tool that measures impacts going beyond the immediate effects of Life Skills training or teaching
Coordination and dialogue among funding agencies so as not to pull grantees in different directions

Common consolidation of items that can measure different indicators
Repository where one can go get measurements for specific Life Skills
Focal point to share items and facilitates validation
Ensure that assessment tools that are developed are developed from close connection to practice rather than just an “intellectual process” to practice
The African voice, local voice is heard to enhance ownership, appropriateness and relevance.
Build on simple tools that are being developed or in process, which are easy to use and to analyze tools
Leverage existing partnerships/programs to introduce changes in teacher practices and assessment of Life Skills
WHAT IS NOT NEEDED
More of self-reporting tools
Enumerator administered or self-administered questionnaire for students measuring performance skills
Another assessment tool developed in the Global North and then attempts made to localize it

06

Key Lessons and Way Forward

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Key Lessons and Way Forward

Based on the findings of the scoping study and experiential knowledge of the adolescent and Life Skills landscape in East Africa, we offer insights and propose recommendations for the strengthening of policy, programming and practice particularly in relation to assessment. Though directly targeting Echidna Giving, the insights from the study will also have implications for other stakeholders — the civil society organizations, government agencies, school managements, teachers and hopefully the young people themselves.

Insights

1. Over the last two or more decades, Life Skills Education as offered in the formal school curricula in East Africa, has undergone several significant changes. It had been integrated into the HIV and AIDS curriculum at the beginning and then transformed to a standalone subject at some point, and then changed back to its delivery through carrier subjects. It has been taught through biology, religious education, social studies, and sexuality education among others. Co- and extra-curricular activities have been offered as good candidates for the teaching and learning of Life Skills. And it has gone back and forth between the questions: To examine or not to examine? Through all these upheavals, Life Skills Education as a curriculum subject has survived. It has survived most likely because education policy makers have stood steadfast in insisting that it should remain, albeit driven partially at least by extrinsic motivation, the promise of resources from international agencies to make sure it does not go away. However, extrinsic allurements alone are not and cannot be sustainable; rather the resilience of Life Skills lies in its relevance to children and adolescents in today's fast changing world as it was in the 1990s and 2000s. There are some policy makers and technical experts who recognize this. It has therefore been integrated into the competency-based curriculum in Kenya and the thematic curriculum in Uganda. In secondary schools in Kenya, it will be taught through Community Service Learning. The curriculum reform process in Kenya and possibly Uganda, offers opportunity to strengthen the teaching, learning and assessment of Life Skills.
2. But what has been the impact of 20 years of Life Skills Education in the region? We are not sure because it has not been assessed despite the debates and discussions that have been going on around it. When Life Skills were examined in the formal education system, the exams were inappropriate and taught to the test than for the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills, and for behavior and attitudinal changes. When non-examinable, the teaching of Life Skills have been deprioritized and replaced by examinable subjects like Mathematics and English since teachers and schools tend to be rewarded based on the examination mean score. And even if the teachers did want to measure and assess the impact of Life Skills on learners, they neither had the training nor the tools to do so effectively. Clearly, the ministries of education, curriculum development centers and examination councils had not or were unable to come up with tools that were appropriate for the measurement of Life Skills, sustain good quality training and provide an enabling space for the teaching of Life Skills in schools.
3. To some extent, the civil society organizations filled the gap by teaching of Life Skills through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in schools (and out of school) but rarely did they intervene inside the classroom. This appears to be changing. Some civil society organizations have continued working from the outside, some bridging the gap between the school, household and community while

others have been crossing over to the inside providing pedagogical and other support to strengthen teachers' capacity to teach Life Skills effectively. Not bogged down by bureaucratic barriers, they have been bolder with innovation; a few have experimented with assessments, and have tested and piloted tools but they are yet to be taken to scale. The challenge has been to find the right balance of technique, simplicity, context, flexibility and relevance keeping the end user in mind. It is unlikely that teachers will use complicated assessment tools that add to their already heavy workload.

4. The road to empowerment is bumpy for both genders from urban informal settlements and poor rural communities. The sampled organizations were aware of this; but they also recognized that adolescent girls needed an extra push to level the playing field between them and boys. Thus, while recommending similar Life Skills, including Decision-Making for both, most emphasized strengthening Self-Confidence, Self-Esteem, Communication and Leadership among other skills commonly associated with Agency, as critical for adolescent girls to have. However, the study reminds us that social norms influence girls' Agency, and determine whether they can exercise their right to take decisions on matters that affect them or to express themselves freely. If the socio-cultural environment is not receptive to increases in girls' Agency, and find it threatening to the established power relationships (often an intersection of gender and age), then it may constrain girls and boys from benefiting equally from the interventions.
5. The search for an appropriate assessment tool continues. While there are some, a minority who have successfully developed assessment tools adequate for their needs or piloting them, there are many others who are struggling. There is, therefore, space for the co-creation of an appropriate assessment tool or set of tools. Who participates in this will depend greatly on a number of factors, including the path taken to create it, and what the tools will ultimately measure. As noted in the previous chapter, the vast majority of those organizations sampled, expressed willingness to participate should such a forum be created, but there were outliers who raised concerns regarding the purpose, motivation and usefulness of additional tools. These voices also need to be heard.
6. And that brings us to the issue of conceptualization. There is a divergence in how Life Skills are conceptualized, what they mean and how they are prioritized across and within sectors, and whether the prioritization is or should be gendered. They do not fit in neatly into any one framework. The one most widely used is the WHO/UNICEF definition popularized in the late 1990s/2000s, and was adapted by the curriculum development centers.
7. Despite these differences, 50 percent of the Life Skills organizations agreed on some core skills that in their view was important for adolescents to have. These include the higher order Thinking Skills, particularly Decision-Making, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, as well as Interpersonal Skills, Self-Awareness, Communication, Self-Confidence, and Leadership skills. While Creativity is among the most frequently mentioned, less than half the organizations prioritized it. Empathy, surprisingly, was singled out by only three organizations.

Recommendations

1. Based on the research findings, we would like to strongly propose that Echidna Giving supports a process of co-creation of a set of tools to assess the impact of Life Skills on adolescents, especially girls, in the region. Co-creating a set of tools rather than one tool would address the needs of diverse contexts, interests and capacity of the different participating organizations.
2. Linked to the above, it is proposed that Echidna Giving considers a phased approach in which the co-creation of tools is clustered around thematic skills groups building a common agenda focusing on common priorities rather than country groups. This will ensure that there is unity of purpose, the tools are relevant, address diversity and tackle the creation of tools step by step for different groups of

skills. Three priority issues, singled out by organizations, around which collective impact initiative may be developed include: Tool that cuts across and is able to measure different programs on the same scale; the quantification of the economic impact of Life Skills on adolescents; and tools to assess the impact of Life Skills on girls. Linked to the last, a fourth theme around which assessment tools may be co-created is assessment of Agency of adolescent girls.

3. The study found some interesting assessment tools already in use or in the process of being tested or piloted. Information on these tools should be shared among different organizations, and discussions facilitated to ascertain whether some or any may be used as starting points for the co-creation exercise.
4. Whereas there is visibly a need for the co-creation of assessment tools, Echidna would do well to encourage continuous communication, sharing and learning as well as capacity building to ensure developers and users of the tool read from the same page. For example, it has been noted that teachers are often reluctant to teach Life Skills, partly because of the lack of training, which is necessary for the effective implementation of the Life Skills curriculum.
5. The study found some ambiguity and misconceptions regarding what co-creation means. It is important therefore to build a common understanding around this issue, differentiating between co-creation and simply reviewing products produced by external experts. It is proposed that this should be an initial step in the process.
6. Related to the above, it is critical that clarity is built around what participation in a co-creation process entails, that it will require certain commitments and there will be obligations from both the participating organizations and the funding agencies. This clarity will help to build trust between various parties from the onset.
7. It will be critical to have a common understanding of Life Skills and guided by their programmatic focus, which specific Life Skills will address their concerns best. There is also need to define the purpose of the tool that they intend to develop -- what do they intend to use it for? What do they seek to measure or assess and why? Who will be the primary user and who will its target? It is proposed that consensus is built at inception on such conceptual issues.
8. What should be some of the selection criteria for participation in the co-creation process? Building on the recommendations made by the informants, we propose:
 - a. Certainly, willingness is fundamental. Fourteen of the 16 organizations expressed willingness to participate but it is essential that at no time should they be made to feel compelled to do so.
 - b. While strategic influence should be a criterion in selection of the lead organization, care should be taken that the organization chosen is able to make time to provide conceptual and technical guidance to the process.
 - c. Care must be taken smaller organizations, which do not have a national presence not be edged out of participating actively as their need for tools may be the greatest.
 - d. Though ultimately rewarding, the process can be intensive and engaging and therefore will require investments in time and human resource. An organization wishing to participate must be prepared to dedicate staff time to it at the very minimum *not because the donor is demanding it*, but because it will be to their benefit to do so, and because it is in response to a priority need expressed by them.
9. The scoping study revealed that the organizations implementing Life Skills have different levels of experience and expertise. Some may be totally new in the Life Skills field but even those that have been in the field for long felt that they lacked the expertise in leading such a process. Others have shown commendable growth in Life Skills assessment. It is critical that the team leadership is based on experience in implementing Life Skills initiatives within the East African region, have the expertise in assessment, is gender responsive and promotes an organizational culture of trust, respect and

learning.

10. In Kenya and Uganda, the civil society organizations have been working closely with the government institutions to develop and implement Life Skills interventions, and sit on project advisory boards of civil society organizations. Representatives of the ministries of education, curriculum development centers and examinations boards should be invited to join in the co-creation process from the onset to facilitate ownership and government uptake. This is already happening to some extent in the RELI Values and Life Skills Thematic group in Kenya where the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development is invited on a needs basis to the meetings. It is also happening in the TVET sector Values and Life Skills working group, also in Kenya.

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Annexes

Annex A: Interview Guide

A. Information on Organization's Role/Status in Education Landscape

1. Tell us a little bit about your organization.
 - a. Where do you work (geographical coverage)?
 - b. What drives your work (organization perspective) (Could ask about the mission and vision (if not on website or background information that you already have)?
 - c. What is your flagship program/project?
2. What is the role of your organization within the education landscape?
 - a. Is your organization part of any networks or partnerships (regional/within country)?
 - b. If yes, which ones?
3. What is your specific role within the organization?

B. Organization's involvement in adolescent and Life Skills implementation and conceptualization of Life Skills

4. What work does your organization do in terms of adolescent/girls empowerment and Life Skills (or related) programming?
 - a. How long has it been involved in adolescent and Life Skills work (probe individually)?
 - b. What is the focus of your work? (Research? policy advocacy? program implementation? Other?)
 - i. Where are your programs located? (Geographical)
 - ii. Are they standalone or integrated into other programs?
 - iii. What is your primary target group? (Probe for age, gender)
5. How do you conceptualize Life Skills in your work?
 - a. How do you define Life Skills?
 - b. Do you use any other terminology to describe Life Skills (for example, SEL, soft skills, non-cognitive skills, 21st century skills, character-building skills and values, citizenship skills/education, psycho-social abilities/competencies/support, conflict resolution/peace building/peace education, employability/workforce development, higher thinking skills, "Now" skills)
 - c. What has influenced your choice of definition and terminology? (Probe for any framework in use)
6. We would now like to turn our focus to the specific Life Skills/mindset change programs/projects that you are implementing focusing on adolescents especially girls. Could you tell us briefly something about these? (Request for any materials that they have on these programs for more detail – reports, brochures etc.)
 - a. Name of the programs/ projects
 - b. Geographical coverage (country/county/district – unit of implementation)
 - c. What are you trying to achieve through these programs/projects? (Probe)
7. What is the content of these programs/projects?

- a. Which Life Skills are prioritized in them?
- b. How are the prioritized skills defined?
- c. Are they the same for all target groups or are they different? (Probe whether some skills are more important for adolescents? Are prioritized Life Skills different for adolescent girls and boys? If yes, why are they important?
- 8. What approach do you use to teach/nurture Life Skills in these programs/projects?
 - a. How are these Life Skills imparted? (E.g. through the curriculum, co-curricular programs like clubs/societies, games, music, after school activities, community outreach/service)
- 9. Would you like to share key lessons you have learnt from your experiences (past and present) in implementing Life Skills programming for adolescents
 - a. Probe for challenges and opportunities
- 10. Are you partnering with any organization in implementing Life Skills programs?
 - a. If yes, probe for
 - i. Which organization,
 - ii. Division of labor,
 - iii. Target groups
 - iv. Common purpose

C. Assessment/Measurement of Life Skills

- 11. Are you measuring/assessing impact of the Life Skills/mindset programmed?
 - a. If yes, how do you measure/assess?
 - i. Are there any specific tools you are using?
 - ii. Are they open access? (Request for copies)
 - iii. Are the assessment tools/frameworks sensitive to diversity (culture, gender, age, education level/status)?
- 12. Are you collaborating with any other organization in developing or using an assessment tool?
- 13. Do you know of any organization (local/national or global) that is already using/has developed assessment tool/tools? (Probe for description and contacts)

D. Viability of Co-Creation of Open Access Tools

- 14. Is there need for development of another assessment tool or set of tools?
 - a. Why? Or Why not? (Probe)
- 15. If yes, would co-creation of the tools be the way to go?
- 16. If the tool/tools were to be made open access, would you be interested in using it/them?
- 17. What opportunities do you foresee for using the tools?
- 18. What challenges do you anticipate in using the tools?
- 19. If yes, can you suggest ideas for overcoming these challenges?

REMEMBER: Request for any relevant literature/documents including assessment tools/framework.

Annex B: NGO Selection Criteria

1. Leading or part of a network/consortium implementing Life Skills/mindset change programmed
2. Extensive and strong partnerships with organizations of relevance to programming for adolescent girls with the ability to influence policy, curriculum changes as well as classroom practice
3. Ability to mobilize relevant public entities at the national and decentralized/devolved levels towards adoption of innovation ideas and tools
4. Well defined intervention that has achieved a certain scale based on the country context but open to learning and adapting
5. Implementing capacity or modality that offers good insight to work at field level
6. Learning mindset at organizational level that is interested in testing and validating an assessment tool
7. Already using assessment tool to measure Life Skills either developed by themselves or by a partner (global, regional, national)
8. Is implementing a creative, out-of-the box Life Skills programmed but does not yet include an assessment methodology
9. Has a stated mission to teach/impart/bring Life Skills to beneficiaries
10. May or may not have a focus on girls, but is willing to adapt intervention towards gender parity

Annex C: Study Participants

1. List of Informants and Organizations

Organization	Name of Informant	Position
Africa Education Trust (AET)	Tryphosa Kwagala	Country Manager
Africa Education Trust (AET)	Alice	Outreach Officer 1
Africa Education Trust (AET)	Jovia Apiyo	Project Officer
Africa Education Trust (AET)	Daniel Okao	Outreach Officer 2
AfricAid	Jana Kinsey	Executive Director
AfricAid	Jess Littman	MEL Director
APHRC	Dr. Benta Abuya	Research Scientist
APHRC	Nelson Muhia	Researcher
Camfed	Katie Smith	Deputy Director/ Director of Operations
EDUCATE!	Meghan Mahoney	Evaluation Director
EDUCATE!	Frank Omona	Deputy Design and Innovation Manager
EDUCATE!	Laura Smith	Evaluation Associate
EDUCATE!	Hellen Elizabeth Namisi	Acting Head of School Solutions
Kakenya's Dream	Moses Dapash	Program Manager
Kakenya's Dream	Rhoda Ndaiya	Program Staff
Kenya Community Development Foundation	Sylvia Njaaga	Education Team Lead
Kenya Community Development Foundation	Patrick Munyao	Project Officer
Komo Learning Centers	Matthew French	Executive Officer
Komo Learning Centers	David Kafambe	Country Director

Karibu Tanzania Organization	Grasiano Myinga	Deputy Director/ Program Coordinator
Luigi Gissani Institute of Higher Learning	Mauro Giacomazzi	Institutional Development Advisor
Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Learning	Teddy Mutono	Project Officer, RELI Uganda
Luigi Guissani Institute of Higher Learning	John Mary Mitana	Principal of the Institute
Life Skills Promoters	Emmah Wachira	Executive Director
Milele Zanzibar Foundation	Khadija Shariff	Head of Programs
Milele Zanzibar Foundation	Ali Bakari	Head of Education
Milele Zanzibar Foundation	Ghalib Machano	Head of Livelihood
PEAS	Laura Brown	CEO
PEAS	Libby Hills	Chief Technical Officer
PEAS	Daniel Omayo	Head of Programs
Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation	Joyce Atimango	Executive Director
Trailblazers Mentoring Foundation	Jonah Egwayu	Project Officer
Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK)	Sofia Yiega	Executive Director
Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK)	Dr. Charity Limboro	Chairperson
Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK)	Lucy Tengeye	Project Officer
Women Educational Researchers of Kenya (WERK)	Agatha Kimani	Project Officer/RELI
ZiziAfrique	Dr. John Mugo	Executive Director

2. Individuals Consulted

Organization	Name of Individuals Consultant
Amplify	Margaret Butler
Amplify	Aubryn Allyn Sidle
Taxonomy Project EASEL Lab	Katharine Brush
Taxonomy Project EASEL Lab	Bryan Nelson
Taxonomy Project EASEL Lab	Emily Meland
Elimu Yetu Coalition	Daniel Wesonga
Elimu Yetu Coalition	Joseph Wasikhongo
Ministry of Education, Kenya	Fidelis Nakhulo
Save the Children Kenya	Jane Mbagi Mutua
Save the Children Uganda	John Musoke
UNICEF Uganda	Night Stella Candiru
UNICEF Uganda	Rosemary Rugamba-Rwanyange

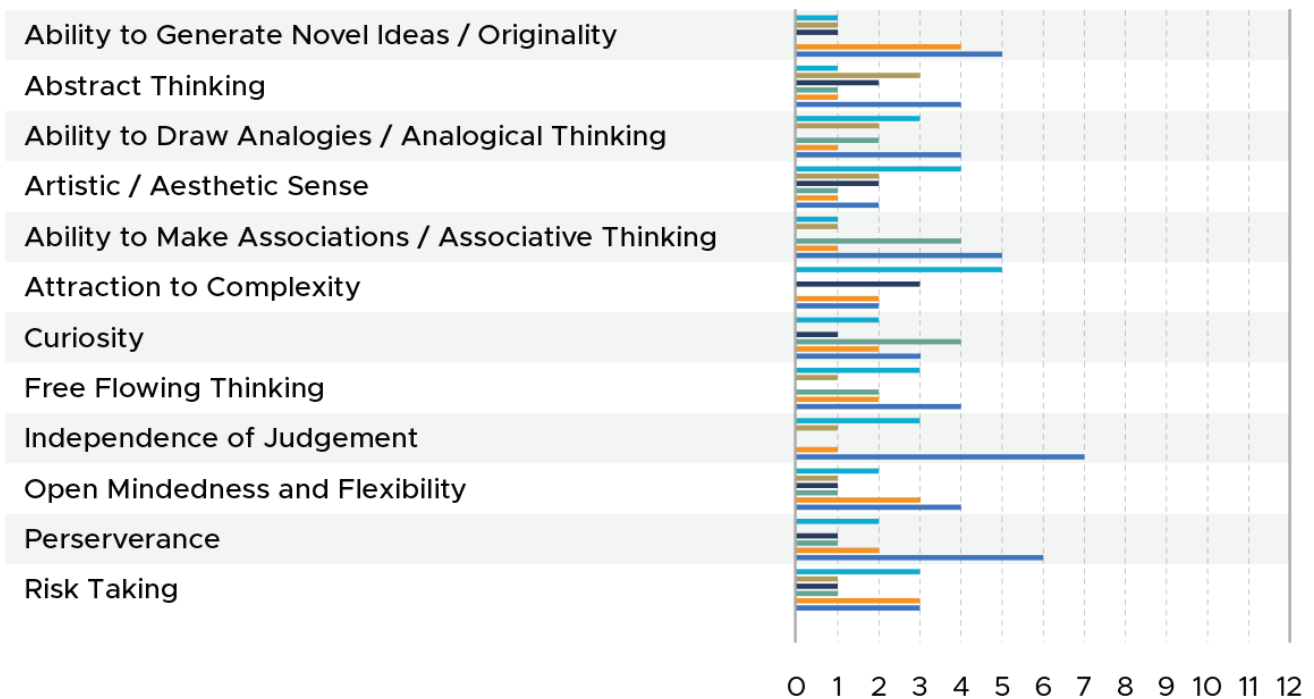
Annex D: On-Line Survey Results

The on-line questionnaire focused on six main skills, namely Creativity, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Executive Function, Leadership, and Workplace Competencies. Each main skill had a series of associated sub-constructs. A six-point scale was provided for each of the sub-constructs. Respondents were required to select a number on this scale that reflects the extent to which a skill sub-construct is an intended outcome of their Life Skills interventions. The scale ranges from '0', which is not at all to '5', which is a key skill that the intervention is seeking to build.

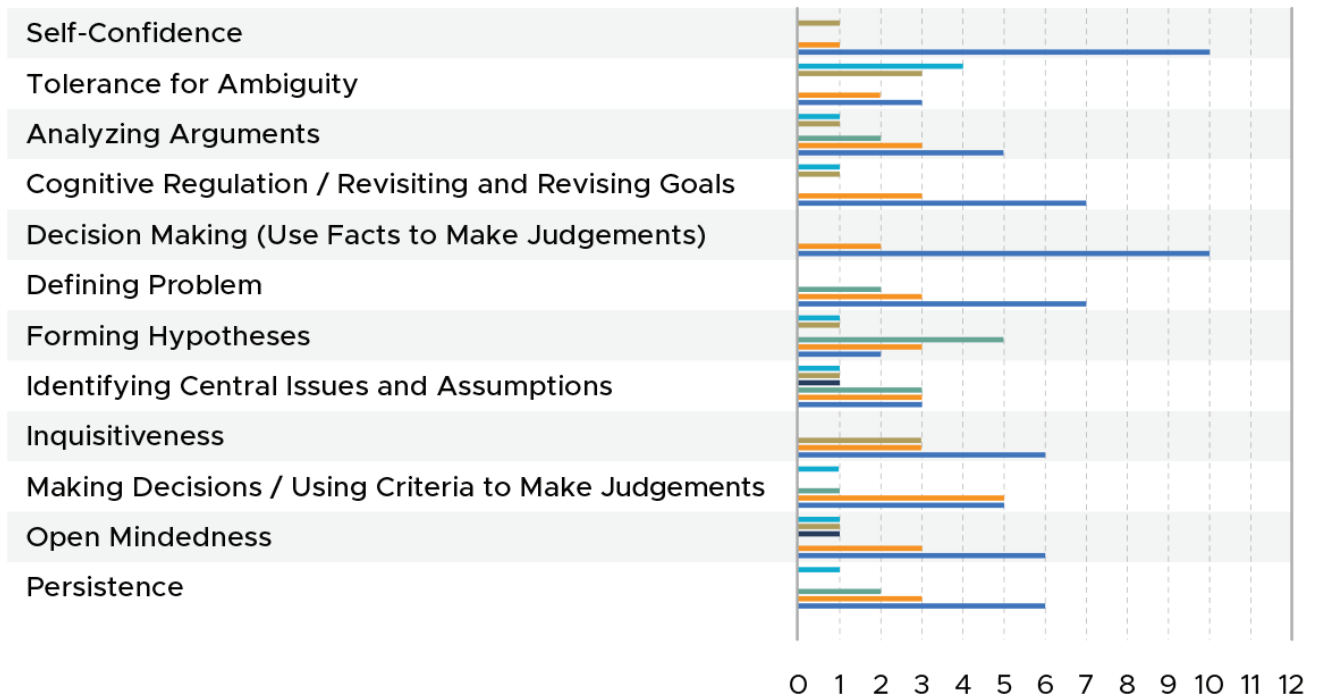
Legend



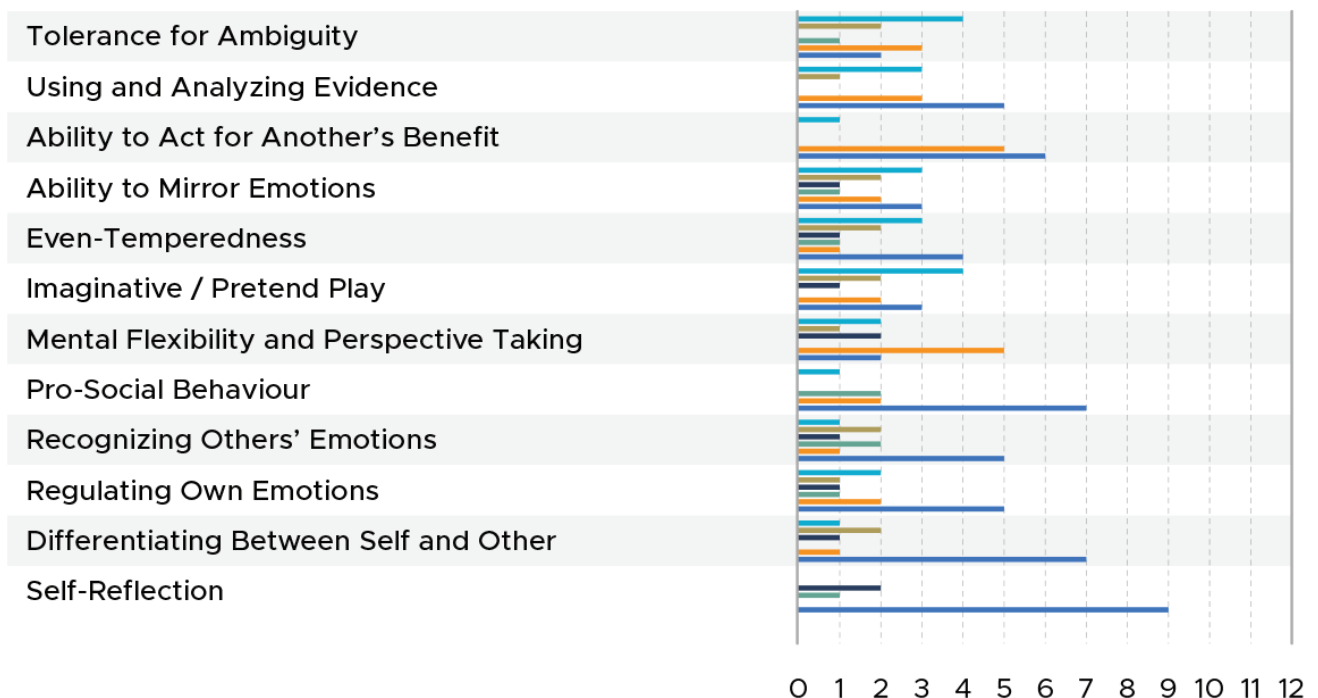
A. Creativity



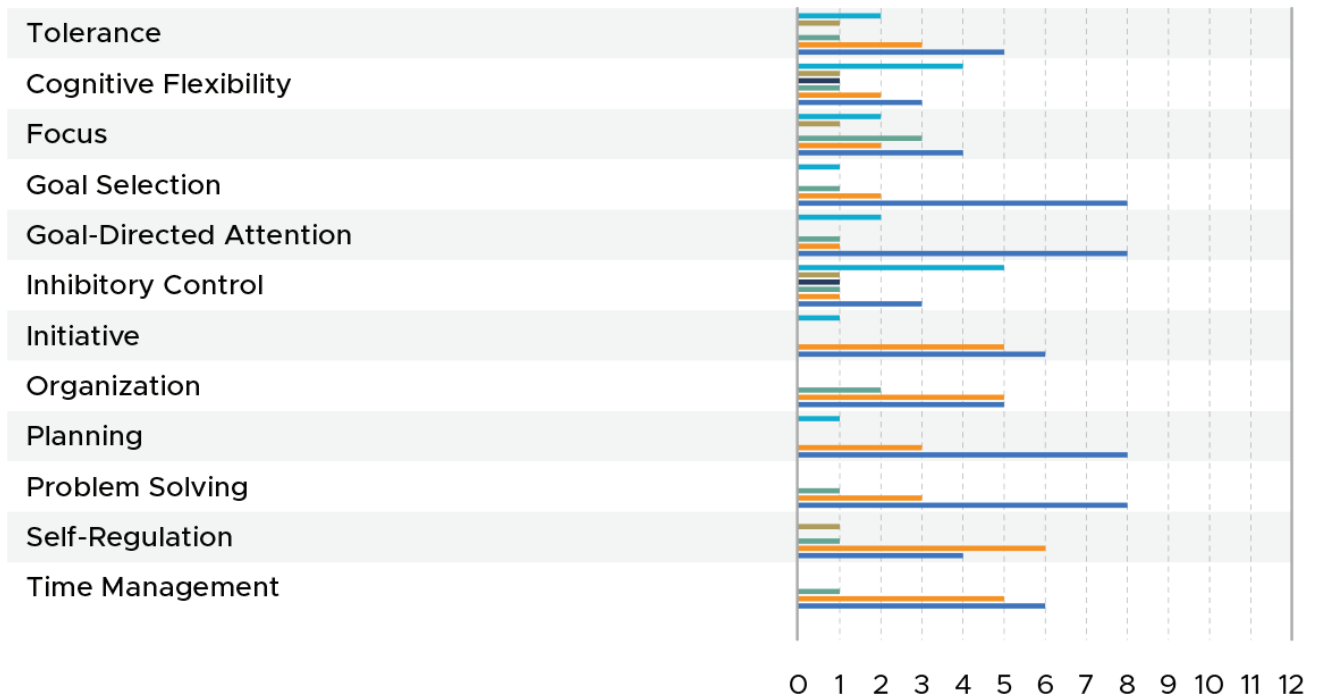
B. Critical Thinking



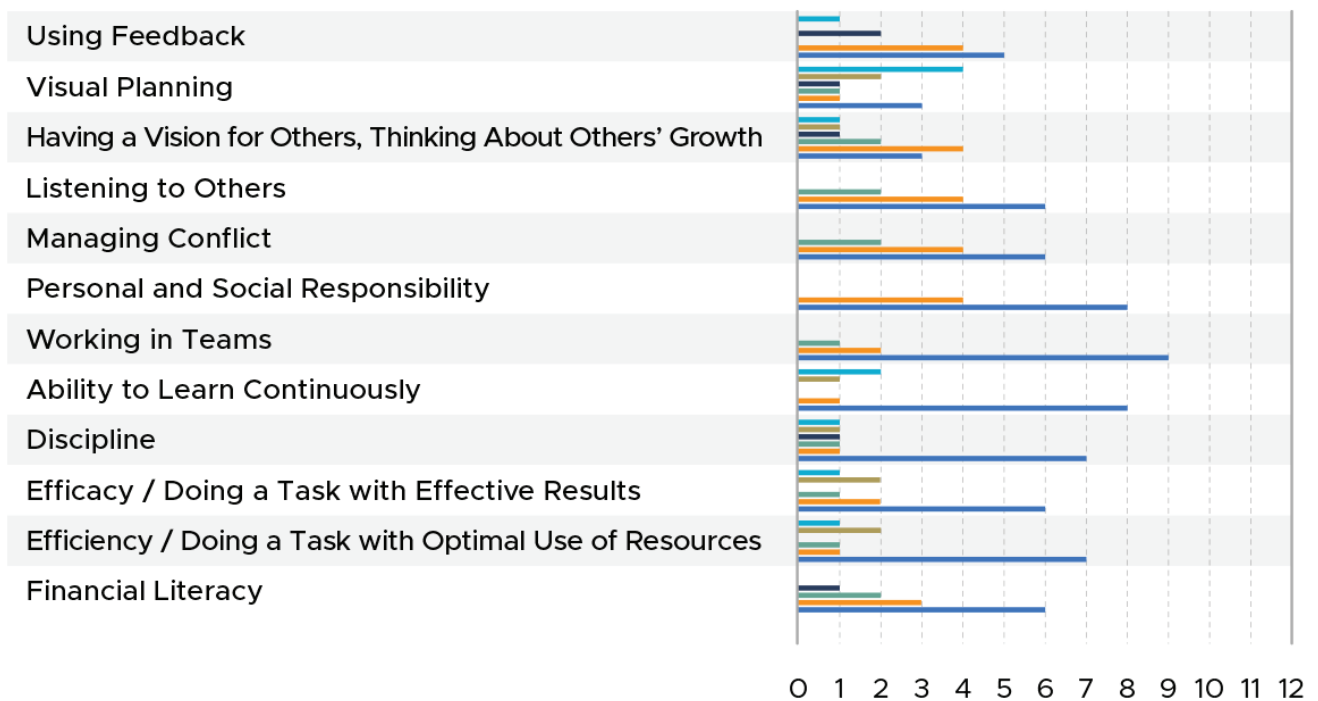
C. Empathy



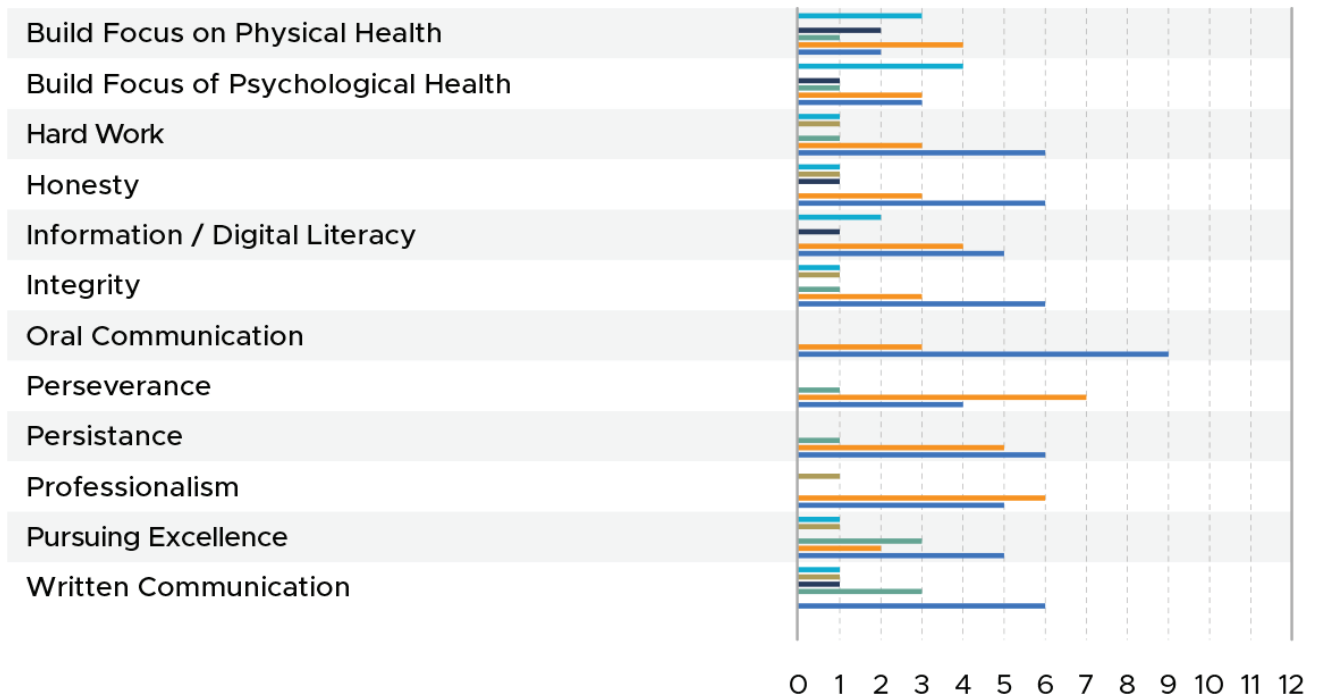
D. Executive Function



E. Leadership Traits



F. Other Work Related Competencies



Annex E: Informed Consent Form

Echidna Giving Life Skills and Mindset Change Project East Africa

Principal Investigator: Dr. Sheila Parvyn Wamahiu

Co-Investigator: Ms. Naom Ondicho

Organization: Jaslika Consulting

Commissioning Organization: Echidna Giving

Project: Life Skills and Mindset Change Project

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet**
- **Certificate of Consent**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form to sign and return to the Principal Investigator

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am Sheila Wamahiu of Jaslika Consulting, commissioned by Echidna Giving, an international philanthropic organization. I am conducting a scoping study on the viability of co-creating an open access assessment tool to measure impact of selected Life Skills and Mindset Change interventions, especially on girls, in the East African region. In my letter requesting for an appointment, I had already provided you with a brief on the project purpose and background. However, if you have questions during or after the interview, you can ask raise them with me at any time.

Purpose of the research

As indicated in the letter, the purpose of this research is to facilitate a deeper understanding of Life Skills frameworks from several implementing organizations to determine the viability of co-creating an open access Life Skills assessment tool. A similar study is also being undertaken in India. The consultancy in both regions has two main components: (a) comprehensive desk review of relevant literature; and (b) in-depth interviews with selected implementing organizations and global/regional leaders in the field of Life Skills and mindset programs and policies.

Experiential knowledge confirmed by relevant literature suggest that there may not be need for more innovation of Life Skills and mindsets programs in order to scale up and convince governments to adopt and adapt integration in to middle and secondary school curriculum. There is a gap, however, on evidence demonstrating the impact of Life Skills on students' academic performance, perseverance in school and readiness for life beyond school. In order to build this body of evidence, Echidna Giving believes that there is need for a better conceptual framework of the key Life Skills and mindsets to focus on, and a common approach of how to measure them in order to compare impact across programs.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in an open-ended interview that should take about one hour of your time. As indicated in the invitation letter, you are free to invite any of your colleagues you feel will add value to the conversation.

We may do a follow-up of this interview to fill in any gap in the information we obtain from you or from the documents that you share with us. We expect to do the follow-up primarily via email.

We shall also administer a brief on-line questionnaire for you to complete. It should not take you more than 10 minutes to complete the form. I shall share the link to the questionnaire with you via email.

Participant Selection

We have invited you to take part in this research as an informed representative of your organization. We believe your insights and experience will contribute greatly to the success of the project. Your organization was selected purposively based on pre-set criteria.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on any work-related evaluations or reports. You are free to change your mind at any point and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

We are asking you to help us learn more about the Life Skills landscape in East Africa in general and your country in particular. We shall ask you questions relating to your programs and projects that target adolescents, especially girls, and the extent to which they incorporate the teaching or nurturing of Life Skills or related issues. We would also like to learn from you how your organization conceptualizes these Life Skills, and what it considers to be the critical Life Skills for turning the lives of adolescents around; and how you measure the impact of the Life Skills interventions. Ultimately, we seek your insights on assessment tools: Are you already using any? If yes, who developed them and what do they measure? What are the challenges and opportunities for co-creating an open access assessment tool to measure the impact of the interventions on adolescent girls?

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer and her colleague will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the team of two interviewers will have access to the interview transcripts. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no one will be identified by name on the tape or transcriptions. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the Principal Investigator will have access to the tapes.

The information that you share with us will be analyzed and presented in the form of two reports to Echidna Giving. The first will be a comprehensive internal report for Echidna Giving and will contain findings of the scoping exercise. This will have restricted circulation. The second will be a brief external report that will be open access. All identifiers will be removed from the main body of the report in cases where informants are quoted directly or their

words are paraphrased. However, the reports will include appendices with the names of informants and sampled organizations from the three countries (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.) If you wish to have your name withheld from the list in the appendix, please indicate it in the Informed Consent Form that you will return to us.

Risks

The risk to you or your organization in participating in this interview is low. However, if you do share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics, please do not hesitate to let us know. First, you do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable. Second, you may ask for specific information to be redacted from the transcript. Third, you may also request that the interview not be audiotaped in part or in full.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you as an individual, but your participation will add value to knowledge generation on Life Skills and mindset change interventions and determine the viability of co-creating assessment tool or set of tools to measure the impact of critical Life Skills on adolescent girls.

There may not be any direct benefit to your organization. However, should a decision be taken to move ahead with the co-creation of the assessment tools, your organization may be able to contribute to its development directly or indirectly, and make use of the tool when it's finally developed if relevant to your needs.

Confidentiality

We will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. The interview transcripts will be coded to ensure that anonymity is maintained at all times.

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. However, I reserve the right not to answer any questions I am not comfortable with, or to request redaction of specific sections should I feel it would compromise me in any way.

1. Name of Key Informant

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

2. Name of Key Informant

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. Name of Key Informant

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Statement

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Name of researcher taking the consent: Sheila Parvyn Wamahiu

Name: _____ Signature: _____

