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Foreword



Ms. Nidhi Chibber Chairperson, Central Board of Secondary Education

Young people of our country offer a tremendous opportunity for driving growth and development, but we need to equip them with skills that enable them to think independently and work consciously towards careers that suit their aptitude and potential. It is our duty as educators to provide them with holistic learning to help them fulfil their duties towards oneself, their community, and the nation as a whole. With an average age of 29,¹ India has its largest ever adolescent and youth population. Young people are aspirational, hard-working, and resilient. With concentrated efforts and investments in their education, skilling, and leadership, young people hold the power to transform the social and economic fortunes of the country.

A big step towards this holistic approach was the National Education Policy 2020 which "aims to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner." The NEP 2020 states that this integrated approach leads to positive learning outcomes and helps develop well-rounded individuals to possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields. The policy is based on the principle that education should develop not only an individual's cognitive capacities through academic learning but also, higher order cognitive capacities such as decision making, problem solving and critical thinking along with social, emotional, and ethical capacities and dispositions.

In this backdrop, CBSE launched the Adolescents Peer Educators Leadership Program in Life Skills, Holistic Health and Wellbeing in November 2021. More than 2600 CBSE schools across the country were enrolled for the initial phase of this program which aims to amplify in building their resilience, mental wellbeing, self-esteem, social sensitivity, better communication skills, enhanced ability, set goals and lead a socially productive life. We have also developed a Handbook on 21 st Century Skills, and also have a comprehensive curriculum on employability skills for secondary and senior secondary school students.

To this end, programs that can be implemented at scale are essential to serve the large and diverse populations of youth in the country. The Young Warrior NXT initiative by YuWaah at UNICEF is an innovative approach to highlight and test programs that can be scaled to serve these diverse populations. Testing the learning outcomes on different facilitation levels along with the medium of learning shall give us a good insight into what programs might work at scale to make the young people of our country equipped with the adequate skillset.

I believe that this report shall serve as an important resource for public and private organizations working in the 21 st century skills ecosystem to fine-tune their interventions and create greater impact at scale. I wish YuWaah and the Young Warrior NXT team the best of luck and I hope they continue to enable young people to fulfil their potential.



Mr. Ravi Venkatesan
UNICEF Special Representative for
Young People and Innovation

Young people today face complex social, cultural, and economic challenges. Almost half (45.9%) of educated young people are unemployable, with only 2 per cent of the population having formal vocational training and only 6 per cent with informal training. The ongoing Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated pre-existing education (learning and skilling) disparities in India, further reducing the opportunities for young people.

On the other hand, the UN Population Statistics database estimates that India will add another 183 million people to the working age group of 15-64 years between 2020-50. A whopping 22 per cent of the incremental global workforce over the next three decades will come from India. Thus, India faces a unique demographic window of opportunity that can be converted into a dividend only by empowering our young people with the relevant skills, abilities and mindsets to thrive in the 21st Century.

With climate change and the move towards sustainable living globally, there is a need to be far more intentional about inculcating a different mindset, new skills and strategies to execute this vision. There should also be concentrated efforts towards developing a growth mindset in our young people, wherein they are willing to take a risk and think outside the box, for innovation leads to scalable and powerful solutions. Young people as problem solvers and entrepreneurs equipped with these skills, hold the key to progress towards a more sustainable future.

Skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, self-awareness, communication, popularly clubbed as 21 st century skills or life skills, are timeless and as necessary today as they were 30 years ago and will be 30 years into the future. With far reaching impact on personal and professional quality of life, these transversal skills have been emphasized upon by educators and employers alike – with a crucial shift from viewing them as "soft skills" to their importance as "power skills".

Against this backdrop, the Young Warrior NXT initiative has done a commendable job in convening diverse stakeholders to design, test and scale impactful models of life skills delivery. Solving at speed for the urgent skilling needs of youth in the 21 st century needs to be a collaborative effort. The sandbox environment created for piloting 15 unique models with experienced implementation partners is a unique approach. Extending support with funds and strategic partnerships to design, monitor and evaluate the pilots has enabled the generation of evidence in this fairly nascent space of life skills. The documentation of the analysis, findings and best practices in the Young Warrior NXT report can strongly inform and guide the efforts to institutionalize and scale access, such that no leave any young person behind. The report is a good toolkit for policymakers educators, implementation organizations, funding organizations, academia and the various stakeholders invested in empowering young people with skills for the 21 st century.

I wish the Young Warrior NXT initiative all success in advocating and enabling life skills delivery at scale.



Acknowledgements

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Objective and Scope of Report

To thrive in the 21st century, young people will need to be prepared with a set of competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) that equip them to make informed decisions, manage emotional well-being and communicate effectively. In addition to academic excellence, students need to equipped with abilities that will allow them to succeed in, and contribute to, the society in which they live.2 These abilities are called life skills. They include cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking, social skills such as communication and collaboration, emotional skills like empathy, skills to understand one's own identity, such as self-awareness, civic and ethical values and a perspective of the world view.

This report aims to synthesise learnings on the impact upon student skill outcomes, enrollment and engagement, which have been gained from implementing 15 scalable solutions for future delivery of life-skills education with an optimal mix of technology and facilitation, in the country. We propose evidence-based solutions that can be adopted for at-scale³ delivery of life skills education to students in the age group of 14-18 years.

This report intends to present an implementation framework to policy-makers, funders and life skills organisations who are looking to adopt scalable solutions for life skills delivery in India. It has been formed by secondary research and learnings gathered from pilot programmes under the Young Warrior NXT initiative led by YuWaah at UNICEF, India, in collaboration with Udhyam Learning Foundation, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation along with Samagra Governance as Management Unit. The and Programme scope recommendations of this report are limited to interventions, and geographies covered groups pilot



- 2. Life Skills in India An Overview of Evidence and Current Practices in our Education System, CSF, 2015
- 3.. At least one lakh learners

Chapter 1 Need for Life Skills in India



What are Life Skills?

Life skills comprise a wide-ranging and often unstructured set of skills and attitudes that is difficult to rigidly define and that has not been officially codified or categorised.4 While WHO defines life skills as the abilities for adaptive and behaviour positive that enable individuals to deal with, effectively, the demands and challenges of everyday life, OECD refers to life skills as social, and emotional skills as the abilities to regulate one's thoughts, emotions and behaviour.⁵ On the other hand, the Life Skills Collaborative (LSC), in its India glossary, defines life skills as abilities that enable a person to navigate a range of unique contexts with a sense of personal confidence, social conscience and professional competence.

For the purpose of the YW NXT initiative, we refer to the definition given by UNICEF

India's Comprehensive Life Skills Framework, 2019.

Life skills are defined as a set of abilities, attitudes and socio-emotional competencies that enable individuals to learn, make informed decisions and exercise rights to lead a healthy and productive life and subsequently become agents of change.⁶

Life skills also add capabilities and attitudes, beyond academic excellence, that can equip young people to transition into a fast-changing world of future work and create success and opportunities for themselves in the 21st-Century. There is a strong evidence base demonstrating that cognitive skills and life skills are complementary in affecting socio-economic outcomes, and that building character skills can be life-changing especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The terms 'Life Skills' and '21st-Century Skills' are used interchangeably and refer to similar skill sets, abilities and mindsets. However, this report uses only the term 'Life Skills'.











- 4. Life Skills in India An Overview of Evidence and Current Practices in our Education System, CSF, 2015
- 5. Social and Emotional Skills, Wellbeing, Connectedness and Success, OECD
- 6. UNICEF India's Comprehensive Life Skills Framework, 2019
- 7. Social and Emotional Skills, Wellbeing, Connectedness and Success, OECD
- 8. Life Skills in India An Overview of Evidence and Current Practices in our Education System, CSF, 2015



Life skills are defined as a set of abilities, attitudes and socio-emotional competencies that enable individuals to learn, make informed decisions and exercise rights to lead a healthy and productive life and subsequently become agents of change.⁵

Why are Life Skills essential?

In an age of disruptive technological change, in which job markets are changing at speed and the future is becoming increasingly hard to predict, young people in India will need essential life skills such as critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, curiosity, leadership, resilience, and stress-tolerance to face - and navigate - uncertainty with a strong and agile mind.9 Young people drivers of sustainable development (NITI Aayog, 2019), and are predicted to play a crucial role in determining the future growth of the nation. This accentuates the need to invest in building necessary life skills and competencies amongst youth.

As per India Skills Report (ISR), 2021, only 45.9 per cent of graduates from India's colleges are found to be employable. According to the World Economic Forum, of the 13 million youngsters that join the workforce each year, only one in four management professionals, one in five engineers and one in ten graduates are employable. Further, according to a UNICEF Report, 2019, more than half the youth of South Asia are on track to have neither the education nor the skills needed to be employable, in 2030.

This implies that education is in itself not preparing the youth for the fast-changing nature of employment, and the growing requirement for cognitive and socio-emotional abilities and creative skills needed to be effective in work and continuous in growth. There is growing evidence that life skills play as much role as academic skills in shaping longer-term education outcomes through better social competence and grades, employment outcomes through better occupational status and income, and health outcomes through personal well-being and satisfaction with life.¹⁰

Current Status of Life Skills Education in India

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 laid emphasis on teaching students broader life skills along with providing constructive learning

experiences. However, imparting life skills has very much lingered on the margins, in the education system in India. This has been largely due to the following reasons:¹¹



Lack of a common vocabulary for the definition of life skills.



Paucity of standardised learner- centred pedagogy to bring life-skills teaching to the centre of schooling.



Dearth of scalable life skills models that can be implemented in schools and communities.



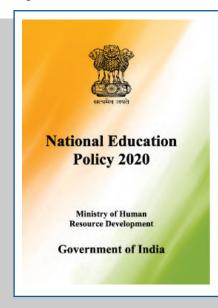
Inadequate capacity building efforts required to upskill teachers to enable integration of life skills with classroom lessons.

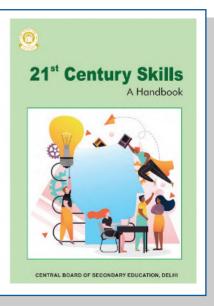


Unavailability of a standardised assessment methodology to measure the impact of life skills interventions.

National Education Policy, 2020¹², focusses on the importance of life skills teaching in the holistic development of the country. CBSE's 21st Century Skills Handbook¹³ has been another effort towards mainstreaming of life skills in

the curriculum by the Government of India. In recent years, state governments of Delhi, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan have adopted their own versions of socio-emotional learning.¹⁴ However, such efforts have been so far limited to a few skills, age-groups and geographies.





Financial Literacy
Digital Literacy
Commercial Skills
Healthcare & awareness

Communication
Cooperation
Teamwork
Resilience

Learning skills
Critical Thinking
Creativity & Innovation
Collaboration

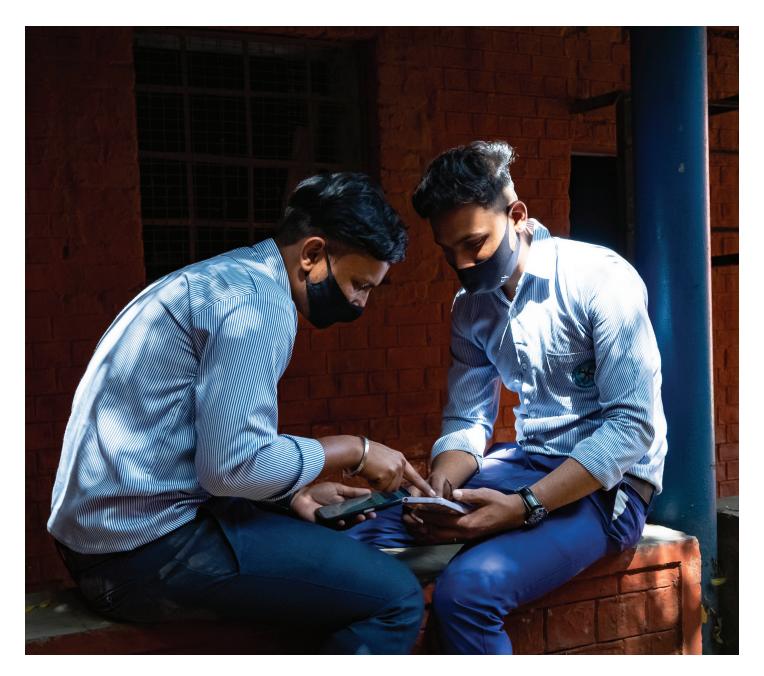
Communication Literacy skills Information Literacy Media Literacy

- 11. Status of Life-Skill Education and Its Practices in India, Divya Singh and Dr. Poonam Sharma, 2016
- 12. National Education Policy, 2020
- 13. 21st Century Skills Handbook, CBSE
- 14. State of the Sector Report Draft, UNICEF

Need for scalable life skills delivery models

Efforts are on globally to integrate life skills training with school education, through interactive learning practices. Countries like Estonia¹⁵, Finland¹⁶ and Singapore¹⁷ have comprehensive life skills curricula. However, In India, efforts around life skills have been diffused. Most initiatives so far have taken a general approach to 'life skills information delivery' (sometimes more as

moral/values education) without a particular context. Focus on curriculum integration and teacher development remains poor. Technology, given its current influx into the education sector, has the potential to act as a significant lever of change in imparting life skills training at scale while impacting learners deeply. Scaling up life skills delivery in the country will require a systemic approach and the integrated efforts of the government and the industry towards identifying impactful delivery models, embedding them in the curriculum design and training teachers for effective pedagogy.



- 15. The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020
- 16. Finnish education system mirroring Life Skills Training Program, Heikki Ervast, 2017
- 17. Learn for Life Ready for the Future: Refreshing Our Curriculum and Skillsfuture for Educators
- 18. Status of Life-Skill Education and Its Practices in India, Divya Singh and Dr. Poonam Sharma, 2016

Chapter 2 Programme Motivation and Objective



While India has been making significant progress with regard to children's right to quality education, children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable, were neither learning nor acquiring skills. This was exacerbated by the closure of all schools and educational institutions during Covid-19, affecting 275 million girls and boys aged 3-18¹⁹. Covid-19 caused major disruption to the normal functioning of schools and led to students adopting remote learning methods – a shift for which they were ill-prepared. Alongside, the pandemic led to an increase in India's youth unemployment rate, causing further ambiguity in the job market. This focused attention on the immediate need for building social emotional skills and employability skills, to empower a generation ready to take on challenges and opportunities of the dynamic 21st century.

In July 2021, Yuwaah in UNICEF, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation and Udhyam Learning Foundation came together to respond to the emergent and imperative need to build the life skills of adolescents in India, and initiated the Young Warrior NXT (YW NXT) programme. This new

initiative stands on the shoulders of the Young Warrior programme — a pan-India campaign initiated by UNICEF and Yuwaah in May 2021 to engage the youth to take small but effective actions against Covid-19.

It sent a clarion call to adolescents to encourage registration for vaccines, to fight myths around Covid-19 and covid vaccines, to make and distribute masks etc., and to safeguard themselves, their families and their communities. The Young Warrior movement, which galvanised over 2.5 million youth into action with its engagement with over 1,350 partners, provided the learnings and the network to initiate a similar, collective action to accelerate the pace and quality of life skills training: through the Young Warrior NXT (YW NXT) programme.

With a long-term vision to mainstream life skills training in the country by embedding it in the formal education system, while simultaneously promoting out-of-school interventions, YW NXT aims to build evidence on the types of scalable life skills delivery models that are impactful and can be adopted by government and non-government organisations. To this end, 15 pilot programmes were run with experienced, reputed implementation partners, each unique with respect to the course content, medium of delivery (no-tech modes like IVRS and DIY kits, low-tech channels like WhatsApp chatbot as well as high-tech learning via web applications), and level of facilitation (complete self-learn models, low-touch facilitator nudges and high intensity classroom training through teachers/trainers). Alongside, a successful, chat-based learning programme -- Young Warrior NXT FunDoo Mini - was rolled out at scale, to allow asynchronous engagement and learning of life skills from the safety of home.







19. Global Monitoring of School Closures caused by COVID-19 Pandemic – Dashboards – Covid-19 Response (unesco.org)-School closures have impacted 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary education and 28 million children who were attending pre-school education in anganwadi centres.

Thus, the two main objectives of the Young Warrior NXT movement are:

To identify scalable and impactful life skills delivery models

To increase the access to life skills training by embedding training in the education system (both formal and informal) as well as enabling out of school channels and methods

At its core, YW NXT aims to impact five lakh adolescents directly with the relevant life skills to make them employable and future ready, with a focus on well-being. The programme aims to achieve this by leveraging existing content, technology and human resources in the ecosystem. While generating strong evidence on scalable, impactful models of life skills delivery, YW NXT is also galvanising partnerships with diverse stakeholders and setting the stage for catalytic expansion in generating access to high quality and relevant training in life skills.

Programme Approach

A sandbox approach was adopted to run multiple partnerships under the Young Warrior NXT programme. It comprised funding organisations, implementation agencies and experts in the life skills ecosystem, government partners and a programme management unit for overall execution and to drive the collaboration among diverse stakeholders within the sandbox.

As a first step towards piloting different life skills delivery models, five anchor skills were selected from existing frameworks. Then, implementation agencies were onboarded to run these pilot programmes on the ground. These were organisations that were already running programmes in the country's life skills space. Given that all the delivery models had to be tested for impact on student skill outcomes, an assessment tool was selected to administer assessments across pilots. It was ensured that these pilot programmes and assessments could work at scale and hence, scalability was inherent to the design of both the life skills delivery models and the assessments.

STEP 1 Selection of five anchor skills

STEP 2 Selection and co-creation of pilot models with implementation partners

STEP 3 Selection of assessment tool

STEP 4 Identification of pilot-level M&E metrics

STEP 5 Pilot testing, including baseline and endline assessment

STEP 6 Final Analysis

We finalised five focus skills (problem solving, communication, collaboration, self-awareness and achievement orientation) which are the most relevant for adolescents, based on recurring mention across global and national frameworks, and which are also measurable. In less than six months, we partnered with 11 organisations, and co-designed and implemented scalable and unique life skills delivery models as pilot programmes. To test all these programmes for effectiveness of impact on student skill outcomes, an assessment tool called 'Future Readiness', created by the Life Skills Collaborative, was adopted for use across all pilots. In addition, these models were also monitored across three key metrics — enrolment, engagement and learner feedback.

Further, life skills training programmes were run in government and affordable private schools in close partnership with CBSE and the governments of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Approximately five lakh students were contacted, out of which 87,722 underwent life skills training and nearly 30,000 students underwent 'Future Readiness' skills assessment with 15,742 students taking both the baseline and endline assessment.

Chapter 3 Young Warrior NXT Impact





PILOT COVERAGE

Programme Duration: 11 Months

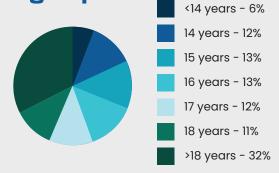
Learners

Learners	Learners
Enrolled	Assessed
87,722	15,742

Gender Split



Age Split



School Split





74%

26%

Skills covered

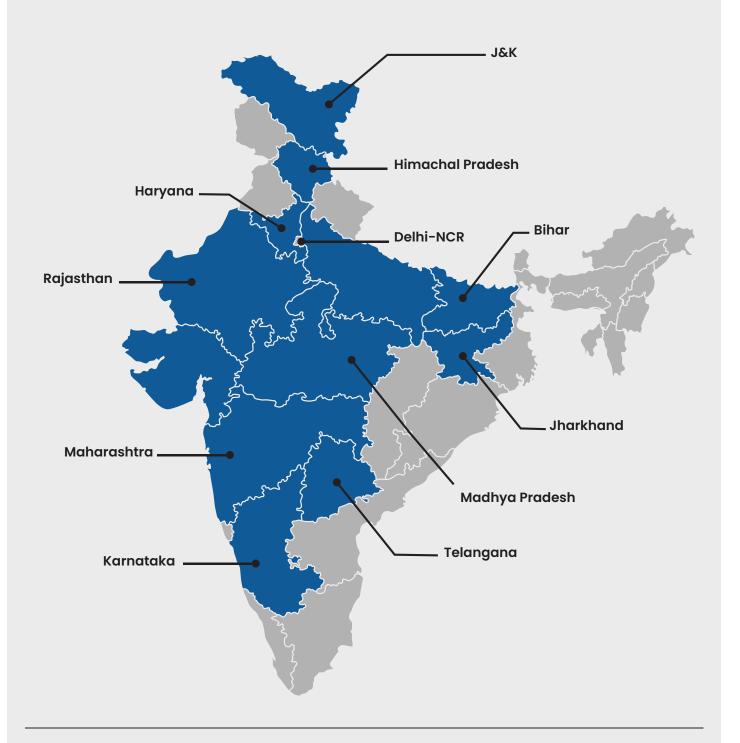
Problem Solving Collaboration Communication **Achievement Orientation Self Awareness**

Delivery Environment





States Covered



Delivery Mediums



Physical Classroom



Graphic cards & IVRS



WhatsApp & Facebook



LMS, Apps and Virtual Class

Pilot partner list



























Average Cost Per Learner

₹ 452



Average % Engagement

39%



Average Growth (Overall)²⁰

5.2 scaled score points



20. This is a change in scores of learners from baseline to endline assessments on an average, when they took both tests

Chapter 4 Key Insights



This section deep dives into the key insights from implementing the YW NXT program. Overall, the program reached 87,722 young people across 15 different life skills interventions.

The 15 different models can be looked at in three categories, based on where the model was delivered, and the type of facilitation involved.







At-home models without facilitation

At-home models with online facilitation / in-person nudges

In-school/centre and blended models with offline facilitation

3 Models

6 Models

6 Models

Engagement²¹ rate ranged from 10% to 87%, with in-school models seeing ~3X higher engagement rates than at-home models. Total course duration varied

from 35 minutes to 36 hours spread over 2-3 months. 5 skills were taught – Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration, Achievement Motivation and Self-Awareness. Each pilot covered at least 3 out of 5 skills.

Engagement Rate by Delivery Location - (Median % Engagement)



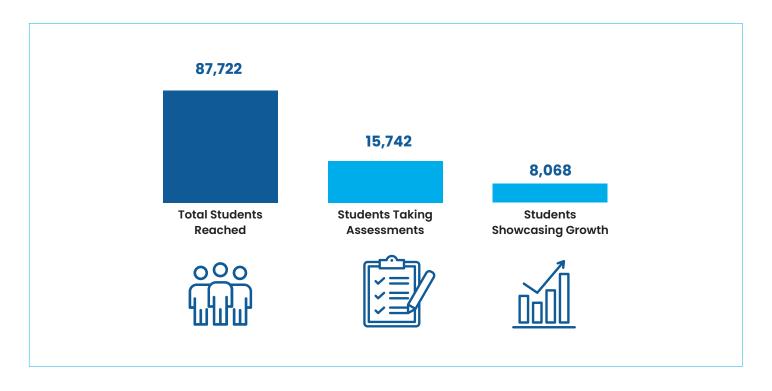


21. Engagement under YW NXT was defined as the time spent by a learner on a given activity within the programme. Engagement rate is total time spent divided by total time allocated for all activities. The activities range from attending a physical class to viewing online content to completing assigned tasks.



Common Assessment Tool

A standardized assessment was used to measure impact for all 15 interventions. The performance metric was absolute growth measured via baseline and endline tests administered to students. To ensure consistency in the analysis, we have only considered results of students who took both the baseline and endline assessments. Of 87,722 students reached through YW NXT, 15,742 (18%) took both assessments and 8,068 (51%) of those students saw an improvement in their scores ²².



22. Random sampling was possible only for 3 of the in-school models facilitated by teachers. For the remaining interventions, students opted-in for baseline and endline, and the results may be biased in favour of more motivated students.

Program Performance Highlights

On average, life skill scores for the 15.7K young people improved by 5.2 scaled score points²³, and 9 of the 15 interventions demonstrated statistically significant impact²⁴. This finding establishes that life skills can be improved. ²⁵

If life skills are essential for positive employability, education and well-being outcomes and they can be improved through focused intervention, then there is a strong case to mainstream life skills education in schools. We identify 5 key learnings that can inform the way-forward approach.





In-school/centre and blended models with offline facilitation demonstrated higher impact

- 5 of the 6 models in the category demonstrated statistically significant growth
- Median²⁶ growth for the category across six models was 22 points on the scale





Secondary research suggests that meaningful teacher training can support delivery of impactful life skills interventions; However, in our 3-month in-school/centre and blended interventions, external facilitators demonstrated higher impact than teachers

- All 3 models leveraging external facilitators had a statistically significant positive impact
- Growth for external facilitators was ~3X higher than teacher-led models (25 points vs. 7 points)
- Teacher-led models should be supported with time and resources needed for meaningful training





Online at-home models showed mixed results

 Impact was likely to be higher if self-learning is accompanied by in-person nudges or structured online facilitation





Communication and collaboration subskills grew more than 6X times problem solving

 Achievement orientation subskills showcased <0 median growth across the 15 models

- 23. 5.2 is the mean change for 15,742 students, measured on a 200-800 scale. This is statistically significant at 99% confidence level.
- 24. All the statistically significant insights are significant at 95% confidence level or above. 9 out of 15 displayed a statistically significant positive change, and 7 out of 15 had a small, medium or large effect size. Large effective size: Cohen d > 0.8, medium effect size: Cohen d>0.5, small effect size: Cohen d>0.2.
- 25. Due to the absence of a control group, YW NXT partners cannot claim direct attribution. However published research indicates that for young people from low socio-economic strata, these skills are not likely to improve without structured intervention.
- 26. Mean is used to calculate averages within models and median for averages across models. This methodology has been adopted because across models, as the number of observations is low (maximum of 15), outliers can swing the mean value significantly



Course completion matters

• Median difference in impact between learners who completed <50% content and their peers was 30% in 4 models the difference in impact was more than 100%

IVRS for Life Skills – "Patakha Sir ki Paathshala"

The highest impact on life skills was seen in an IVRS-based model with in-person nudges. Herein, more than 10k learners, from remote Bihar, Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh, were taught problem solving and communication skills through short, IVRS calls of 2-3 minutes over the course of 8 weeks. Through pre-recorded stories, set in the backdrop of a school classroom, life skills was showcased through interactions among students & teacher. Alongside, volunteers paid weekly home & community visits to learners, to motivate them to engage with the course content and ensuring continued engagement. With cost-per-learner averaging 172 INR, this is a unique, low-cost high impact model that showcases the opportunity for innovation in life skills delivery.

Key Insights

1. In-school/centre-based models demonstrated higher impact

	At-home models without facilitation	At-home models with online facilitation / in-person nudges	In-school/centre and blended models with offline facilitation
# Models	3	6	6
# Impactful Models ²⁷	1(33%)	3(50%)	5(83%)
# Students Assessed	3,349	5,296	7,097
Median Growth Across Models	< 0	5	23

These findings indicate that an offline, 'classroom type' component may be a driver of high impact models. Interaction

with facilitators (these could be teachers or individuals recruited specifically to deliver life skills programs), peer learning and a structured environment could be playing a role.

Priya, a high school student in Rajasthan, describes the immersive programme she attended as follows, "The classroom activities and programme have brought changes in my life that I don't think would have occurred without it. I feel better equipped to communicate my feelings and speak in front of a group. I have built connections that help me understand my classmates and teachers better. I also feel I am becoming a better human being."²⁸

- 27. Any model that witnessed statistically significant positive growth is considered impactful. Effect size is not taken into consideration
- 28. Paraphrased from video content



2. Evidence suggests that meaningful teacher training can support delivery of impactful life skills interventions; However, in our 3-month in-school/centre and blended interventions, external facilitators demonstrated higher impact than teachers

Over longer periods, teachers should be able to deliver at the same level as experienced life skills facilitators. One such example of longer duration teacher training is Dream a Dream's (DaD) Teacher Development Program (TDP). The TDP is delivered through 4 life skills facilitation workshops held over a period of 6-8 months. Each workshop is spread across two days. Data collected using DaD's Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS)²⁹ indicates that student

outcomes for this model are similar to after-school programs delivered by facilitators.³⁰

However, YW NXT program suggests that condensed teacher training might not have the required effect. In YW NXT, half the in-school/centre and blended models were delivered by school teachers and the other half by external facilitators (who were recruited and trained by non-profit partners). The likelihood of success and the extent of impact was much higher for the latter.

	External Facilitator	Teacher	
# Models	3	3	
# Impactful Models	3	2	
# Students Assessed	2,647	4,450	
Median Growth Across Models	25	7	

This does not imply that teachers are a poor delivery channel, but that possibly more time and resources are required to enable teachers to impart life skills effectively. YW NXT was a condensed pilot (2-3 months of interventions) and partners had limited time to recruit and train teachers and TOT staff. The difference in performance could also be due to inadequate time.

^{29.} https://dreamadream.org/financialstype/resources/

^{30.} https://dreamadream.org/impact/; impact report 2019-20, page 14



3. On average, online at-home models without facilitation did not show impact. When supplemented with either in-person nudges or online facilitation, there was some impact

	AT-HOME		
	Self-learn (no facilitation or nudges)	With online facilitation /in-person nudges	
# Models	3	6	
# Impactful Models	1	3	
# Students Assessed	3,349	5,296	
Median Growth Across Models	< 0	5	

YW NXT was launched during the second wave of the pandemic in India. As partial lockdowns were in place, a majority of the models were anchored at-home. 9 of the 15 models tested different ways of engaging students on life skills content at home. However, the performance of these models has been mixed. We observe that, on average, purely self-learning models where content is provided in the form of videos, app-based modules and social-media based announcements/quizzes did not lead to an improvement in scores. The only exception was a digital model which included activity-based tasks alongside an explanatory video module.

Models where self-paced learning is supported by in-person nudges saw higher impact. Examples of in-person nudges include home visits and interaction at community centres.

An intervention where life skills were taught through IVRS-based methods showed the highest impact on learner skill outcomes. These learners were located in remote parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. Volunteers paid weekly home and community visits to learners to motivate and nudge them to engage with the course content.

The data validates learnings from many remote learning initiatives that were piloted during the two years of the pandemic – both on academics and life skills. Simply providing access to content is not likely to deliver results and appropriate nudging, hand-holding mechanisms and activity-based learning are critical for driving both program engagement and a change in outcomes



4. Communication and collaboration subskills grew more than 6X times problem solving; achievement orientation subskills showcased <0 median growth across the 15 models

YW NXT focused on five skills – problem solving, communication, collaboration, achievement orientation and self-awareness. All life skills partners in the program were required to teach at least 3 out of these 5 skills.

Median growth across all 15 models showcased that communication and collaboration subskills grew more than 6X problem solving; achievement orientation subskills showcased <0 median growth

Problem solving

12 of the 15 life skills delivery models taught problem solving skills. Of these, only 6 models showed a positive change from baseline to endline on an average.

Achievement orientation

Only 2 out of the 9 models which taught achievement orientation showed a positive change from baseline to endline.

Communication

9 out of 13 models which taught communication skills showed positive change from baseline to endline.

Collaboration

8 out of 13 models which taught collaboration skills showed positive change from baseline to endline.

Implementing partners think that learners tend to pick-up communication and collaboration skills working with peers and facilitators.. Structured activity or projects along with a forum for discussion can be a great starting point to develop these skills.

	Communication	Collaboration	Problem Solving	Achievement Orientation
Median Growth per Subskill Across 15 Models	0.23	0.19	0.03	<0



5. Course completion matters: Median difference in impact between students who completed <50% content and their peers was 30%; in 4 models the difference was more than 100%

Student engagement is a necessary building block for outcomes. Over the 3-month duration of YW NXT, we worked closely with program partners to track and increase learner engagement. Engagement under YW NXT was defined as the time spent by a learner on a given activity within the programme. The activities range from attending a physical class to viewing online content viewing to completing assigned tasks.

For the engagement analysis, we divided the students into two buckets: those who completed 50% or less of the content allocated and those who completed more than 50%. Of the 15 models, 2 models had fewer than 30 students in the <=50% engagement bucket and have thus been removed from the engagement analysis.

Of the remaining 13 models, 11 saw a higher improvement in scores for students who completed >50% content compared to their peers, and for 6, this finding was statistically significant

Median	# Models with	# Models with	# Models with	# Models with >0
Difference	>100% Difference	>50% Difference	>25% Difference	Difference in
in Growth	in Growth	in Growth	in Growth	Growth
30%	4 / 13	6 / 15	8/13	11/13

While intuitive, the finding that higher engagement leads to impact is still important. For example, participation in

sessions or % completion of content can act as good lead indicators on whether a model will deliver impact and what could be changed on the ground.

Insights on engagement



It takes a village to raise a child: Involving a wider set of stakeholders including school principals, parents and community leaders

Our experience in YW NXT supports the finding that stakeholder buy-in creates a conducive learning environment and improves program delivery. In 4 out of 6 at-home models with facilitation / in-person nudges, significant time and effort was spent in creating parent and community buy-in. In one of the pilots, parents were invited to watch skits prepared by students and were asked to

take a public pledge to support their tchildren in upholding the values taught. Local authorities too played an important role by providing safe community spaces to conduct these sessions.

For in-school models, creating ownership among principals led to better monitoring and support in solving operational challenges. In a school-based blended model, principals made computer labs available to students who did not have access to devices.



The power of communication: Using alternate channels to deliver personalised nudges to learners

Program partners used alternative channels of communication (i.e. a channel different from the main mode of delivery) to improve engagement and nudge students.

Dedicated WhatsApp groups were created for 3 models for posting key action items regarding new content, submissions, and assessments. These nudges increased assignment submission rate from 5% to ~20% on an average.



Digital divide persists: Engagement rate of at-home models without online synchronous elements was 3X that of at-home models with online-asynchronous facilitation / in-person nudges. This finding appears to validate the ASER 2021 data that uninterrupted device and internet access continues to be an issue

Despite rising smartphone and internet penetration, the digital divide persists for learners across specific geographies and income profiles. While the pandemic has brought about greater acceptability and behavioural shifts in favour of digital learning, children from low-income communities typically do not have dedicated devices, high speed connections or unlimited data packs. Data from some states from early 2020 suggests that ~60% did not have the equipment or infrastructure and only about ~20% could sustain remote learning on a regular basis.31 Thus, synchronous learning is not likely to scale in the short term.

Partners delivering live online classes for YW NXT corroborated that learners could not access the shared device when live sessions took place. For example, to increase convenience for learners and make sure the content was delivered, one model had to deliver a given session 9 times in a week. This in turn drives up facilitator time and cost per learner. Another model relied on school partnerships, where each school could opt for either online or offline classes. Schools expressed reluctance for online classes, citing poor access for learners to be able to meaningfully engage with the program.

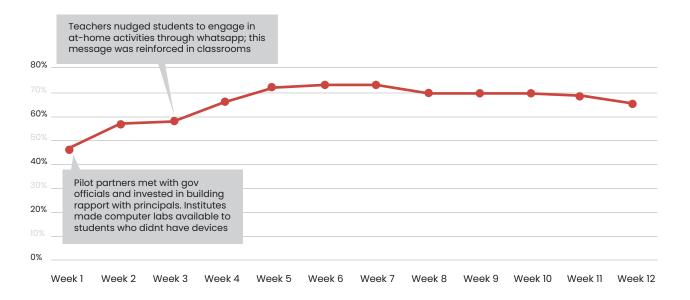
Data from this pilot indicates that in-person nudges could address some of these challenges for at-home models. For example, instead of facilitators doing video calls, community members can conduct visits to nudge the student.



Regular monitoring of data on the student attendance and engagement was core to the pilot project. This enabled early course correction e.g. for

asynchronous content delivered mostly engagement was addressed by nudging students. Similarly local authorities could be brought in to help with logistical challenges faced by in-school/community centre models.

The chart below shows data for one pilot tracked weekly.



Half of India's population is under 30 and more than 25% is under 1532. This could be a blessing, but not if over 50% youth are unemployable in 2030³³. Life Skills are "skills for life" - essential for positive

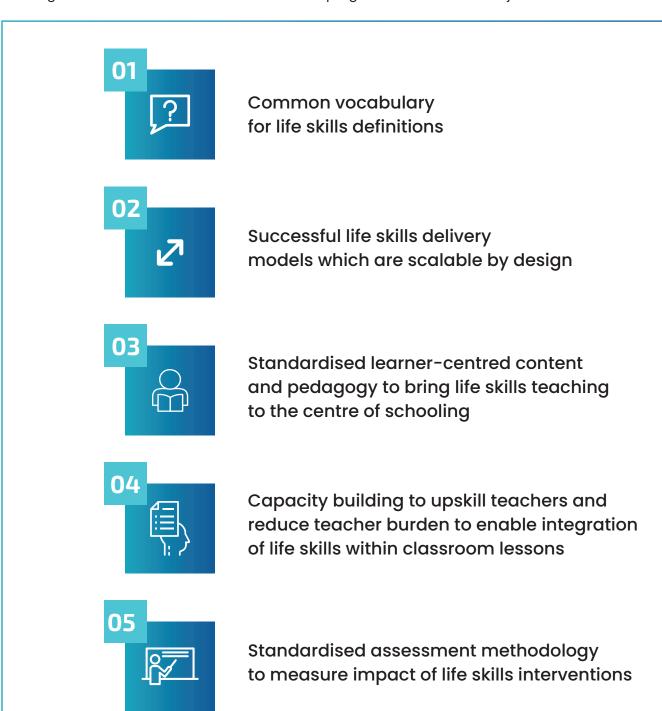
employability, education and well-being outcomes. Simple, low-cost programs can improve life skills at scale. It is important that we step up our efforts and deliver these skills to our young students who have the power to re-shape our societies. We cannot afford to fail an entire generation...

^{33.} https://www.newsbytesapp.com/news/world/over-50-south-asian-youth-unemployable-in-2030-unicef/story





Young Warrior NXT was launched in 2021 with the objective of mainstreaming life skills education in India. Five building blocks were identified at the start of the program to achieve this objective:



Over the last 12 months, YW NXT focused on two aspects:



We partnered with life skills 15 interventions that reached 88K young people across 12 states of India. Models were chosen if they were inherently scalable³⁴ and spanned a combination at-home models with varying degrees of facilitation and at-school/centre models. In addition, a chatbot that taught life skills to 400K+ young people was also launched.

Most models run through the school year and are delivered over nine to twenty-four months, however a condensed 3-month version was implemented under YW NXT. Even with this time constraint, 8 out of the 15 interventions showed a positive impact³⁵ on learner skills. This is an encouraging sign for the ecosystem and indicates potential to deploy similar programs at scale.



A key achievement of YW NXT was a common baseline and endline assessment administered across all partners. The intent is to provide comparable data on the impact of life skills interventions. Data from the assessments generated useful insights on bright spots and scope for future adaptation.

About the tool: The 'Future Readiness Tool' has been developed by the Life Skills Collaborative (LSC) and is intended as a public good for the life skills ecosystem. For assessing interventions under YW NXT, the tool was deployed across 12 states in 4 languages (English, Hindi, Kannada and Marathi). Assessments were conducted in two modes - offline and online. Online assessments could be taken over mobile phones (even in digitally dark areas) and the user interface was designed to ensure maximum uptake among students.

34. A model was classified as scalable if it could be implemented for at least 100K learners at a similar cost per student and without additional complexity

35. Statistically significant at 95% confidence level

Looking ahead - adoption at scale

Learnings from YW NXT have paved a path forward in the right direction. We now have an implementation playbook with at least 9 successful delivery models and programmatic learnings on delivering life skills in different contexts. The common assessment tool provides rich insights on several dimensions. As we collectively chart out pathways to scale, the following aspects will be important:



While the NEP provides high level guidance, support from SCERTs and state resource groups is needed to identify and codify important life skills in each state. When it comes to academics, standardised frameworks like the National Curriculum Framework

(NCF, 2005) and National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat 2020) provide alignment on the end goals and inform on-ground interventions needed to achieve them. A similar effort is needed for life skills. School systems will also have to set aside periods in the timetable for life skills and work toward curriculum integration so that teachers are not over-burdened.



While external actors can provide support in the initial years, a systemic shift to life skills training will require strong in-school delivery. Teachers will need to deliver life skills content alongside the academic curriculum (exactly how this will happen and the extent of integration between the two needs to be detailed out). Teacher capacity thus, will be a critical building block (and can also become a bottleneck in the short term).

We have identified three key areas from a capacity building lens:

- Appropriate pedagogical practices and mindset for delivering life skills
- Innovative teaching techniques like focussed group discussions, presentations, group projects, role plays, games and simulations
- Teacher-aids like codified classroom scripts, assessment tools and teacher-mentor programs

- 20. A model was classified as scalable if it could be implemented for at least 100K learners at a similar cost per student and without additional complexity
- 21. Statistically significant at 95% confidence level



Global evidence indicates that schools with strong family engagement are more likely to see improvement in learning outcomes .³⁶ Across the fifteen life skills interventions within the YW NXT program, involving parents, family members and community leaders in establishing value proposition, creating

accountability, and delivering content had an impact on enrolment, engagement, and impact. In some implementations, we found that on-boarding facilitators from within the community had a positive impact. Going forward, there needs to be a deliberate attempt to involve family members in life skill education through avenues like parent-focused whatsapp groups, parent-teacher meetings and school management committees.



COMMON VOCABULARY FOR LIFE SKILLS

At a national level, there is an urgent need for alignment on what different life skills entail. This is a vast and somewhat subjective topic and common definitions can help both practitioners and governments leverage each other's efforts. The Life Skills Collaborative has initiated the development of a well-researched and India-specific glossary which currently covers ~50 skills .³⁷



Resources for life skills training are being created or curated by multiple non-governmental organisations in silos and are not available as a single repository. A common landing page with

content catering to multiple skills and learners across different age-groups and regions needs to be built. This content should be mapped to state-specific adoption frameworks and proficiency levels using standard definitions. Platforms like DIKSHA and Passport to Earning³⁸ can be explored for aggregating and curating life skills content.

36. https://www.brookings.edu/essay/collaborating-to-trans-

form-and-improve-education-systems-a-playbook-for-family-school-engagement/

37. https://lifeskillscollaborative.in/glossary/

38. Passport to Earning is an e-learning platform curating and enabling 21st century skill building, anchored by YuWaah at UNICEF, under a multi-stakeholder collaboration between UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, Microsoft, Accenture and Capgemini.

ROBUST MEASUREMENT AND RELIABLE DATA

Objective and quantifiable measurement of life skills is an emerging area of work. Currently, very few assessment tools exist to measure impact and these are mapped to just a small number of skills. Standardised

assessment tools that are relevant and contextualised to India are needed. Evidence generated from these tools can be used to create accountability and awareness on life skills amongst a wide range of stakeholders (district and state officials, principals, teachers, parents and children). It can also support the development of holistic report cards, a recommendation of the National Education Policy 2020.



The 9 successful models identified under YW NXT provide a strong starting point, but the gap remains wide and more such programs need to be fostered. We need to continue testing innovative models and contributing learnings back for wider ecosystem growth. Some ideas that require further testing are:

- Testing the effectiveness of longer duration programs
- Learnings from a steady-state environment (as the pandemic recedes)
- Embedding life skills in the curriculum vs. separate lessons
- Catering to learners at different starting levels of life skills (e.g. Teaching at the Right Level)
- Measuring impact of life skill interventions through robust experimental evaluation techniques like randomized control trials (RCTs) to understand magnitude of incremental impact.

Appendix:

1. Pilot Glossary

#	TERM	DEFINITION
1	Achievement Motivation / Achievement Orientation	Demonstrates a sense of purpose and an orientation to achieving mastery.
2	Activity	Types of tasks a learner was required to undertake as a part of the programme. It could be one of the following: classroom attendance, online attendance, content viewing, task submission, any other.
3	Assessment tool	A tool used evaluate students before and after the programme, thus measuring growth.
4	Asynchronous learning	Students learning through content material as per their own schedule and convenience, without the presence of a facilitator or co-learners.
5	Classroom attendance	An activity that requires a learner to be physically present in a classroom.
6	Collaboration	It is a superset of the following sub-skills: a. Manages conflict skillfully and strives to find a solution that satisfies both parties. b. Pulls own weight, supports group members and prioritises group interests to achieve a common goal.
7	Communication	It is a superset of the following sub-skills: a. Knows when it is appropriate to listen or to speak depending on the situation. b. Actively receives a sender's message (including paraverbal cues), withholds judgement, and monitors and clarifies own understanding. c. Creates and transmits messages to effectively convey intended meaning using appropriate paraverbal cues, conventions and communication channels.
8	Content	The information material used to teach life skills to learners. For example, stories, speeches, lessons on five anchor skills of the programme.
9	Content viewing	An activity that requires a learner to engage with audio-visual material shared with him/her. For example, Youtube videos, IVRS calls, etc.
10	Cost per learner	Arrived at by dividing the total cost of delivering life skills training to learners in a given programme, by the number of learners. Total cost includes the cost of training of trainers, programme management cost and total material cost. It excludes fixed cost items such as tech/content development costs and assessment costs.
11	Facilitator	A person imparting life skills training content to the learners.
12	Facilitator mobilisation	Onboarding facilitators to deliver life skills training to learners as part of the preparation stage.
13	Facilitator-student Ratio	The proportion of total facilitators to total enrolled learners in a programme.
14	Growth	A positive change from baseline to endline, either on aggregate, skill or sub-skill level that is statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval with an effect size greater than 0.2.
15	High facilitation	Time allocated to synchronous learning is equal to or more than 25% of the total course time.

Appendix:

1. Pilot Glossary

#	TERM	DEFINITION
16	In school	Programme is being delivered with the approval of school/ ITI authorities, within the school/ ITI premises. However, facilitators need not necessarily be school/ ITI teachers.
17	Language	Language used to deliver life skills content to the learners.
18	Learner	A person enrolled in at least one out of the 15 pilot programmes under YW NXT.
19	Learner engagement	This stage required programme teams to undertake activities to increase the total time spent by learners on the programme across activities such as classroom attendance, online attendance, task submission and content viewing. This included five types of activities: 1. Securing buy-in of key stakeholders such as parents, school/ITI/State authorities. 2. Personal rapport building between programme teams and students.
		 3. Providing incentives. 4. Special focus on students who were not engaging sufficiently, via personalised support from facilitators. 5. Nudges.
20	Learner mobilisation	This stage included reaching out to potential learners and registering them as part of the programme. This included three types of activities: 1. Tapping into existing learner communities, 2. Securing parent buy-in, and 3. Building up the motivation of learners.
21	Low facilitation	Time allocated to synchronous learning is less than 25% of the total course time.
22	Mobilisers	Persons involved in on-boarding learners in the programme.
23	No facilitation	When there is no synchronous learning in the programme.
24	Offline	A learner does not need access to the internet to access programme content.
25	Online asynchronous	A learner needs access to internet and internet-enabled devices to access programme content, but at a time of his/her convenience, not at predefined times. For example, YouTube videos, worksheets and videos shared through a learning management system.
26	Online attendance	An activity that requires a learner to engage with online classroom session using mediums such as Zoom and Meets.
27	Online synchronous	When learners need access to the internet and internet-enabled devices to access programme content at pre-specified times. Ex: Online class delivered using video call.
28	Out of school	The programme is delivered outside of school/ITI premises, within common spaces such as community centres, marriage halls and playgrounds.
29	Pedagogy	The method and practice of teaching life skills adopted in a programme.

Appendix:

1. Pilot Glossary

#	TERM	DEFINITION
30	Preparation	This stage included all activities that determined the state of readiness of the programme to deliver content to the learners. This included four type of activities: 1. Content/tech development 2. Facilitator mobilisation 3. Facilitator training 4. Securing institutional partnerships.
31	Problem solving	It is a superset of the following sub-skills: a. Understands and defines a problem b. Gathers relevant information by asking questions and through appropriate search c. Critically analyses information, evaluates evidence and draws accurate conclusions d. Develops new perspectives and synthesises alternative explanations or solutions e. Identifies, evaluates and implements suitable strategies for solving a problem.
32	Programme	A 2-3 month long initiative of imparting life skills training to adolescents in the age-group of 14-18 years.
33	Programme duration	Number of calendar weeks taken to deliver the programme to a learner (does not include activities done before delivery of life skills training such as mobilisation, content development etc.).
34	Programme team	Personnel required to manage the programme and ensure delivery. This includes programme lead and managers, mobilisers, facilitators,
		content designers, and evaluation officers.
35	Self awareness	Has the ability to see herself clearly and objectively through reflection and introspection.
36	Stage-wise description	Delivery of each programme was divided into three distinct stages — preparation, learner mobilisation and learner engagement.
37	Synchronous learning	Facilitator teaches the learners directly in a physical or online classroom.
38	Task submission	An activity in which a learner is required to participate and submit a response. For example, assignment submission, homework submission, etc.
39	Total course time	Maximum number of hours of learning that a learner could undergo as part of a programme.
40	Total time spent	Total number of hours of learning that a learner actually underwent as part of a programme.
41	Remote	Interventions where all interactions between student, facilitator and content was asynchronous, i.e., at home.
42	Blended	Interventions where some learning content was taught in-person and others, remotely via technology.
43	In-person	Interventions where the majority of content was taught directly at school or in community centres, with some non-tech content consumed at home.

2. Pilot Description

į	#	TERM	DEFINITION
ī	1	Magic Bus Blended	Under this programme, life skills were delivered through a blend of synchronous in-person sessions that were conducted by facilitators from Magic Bus, and via asynchronous digital learning. Learners participated in activity-based synchronous sessions. These were delivered in community commons such as marriage halls over the weekend, followed by post-session worksheets and app-based self-learning over weekdays, alongwith individual sessions with facilitators for clarification of doubts.
	2	NIIT Foundation — Hybrid	Training was delivered in schools through a blend of offline classroom sessions and LMS-based self-learning content.
;	3	NIIT Foundation — Online	Training was delivered through a blend of online Google Meets-based sessions and self learning on an LMS.
•	4	GramVaani IVRS	Under the 'Aao Sath Seekhe' programme, life skills content was delivered using pre-recorded weekly Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) calls. Learners listened to audio-based stories and took a quiz based on multiple-choice questions (MCQs) by clicking digits on the phone at the end of each call.
!	5	Pratham	Under the Future First programme, learners received life skills training predominantly in the self-learn mode using a WhatsApp chat bot. Weekly content was disbursed and assignments undertaken on the chat bot. At the end of the week, Pratham's facilitators conducted an online reflection session, in which the learners engaged in group discussions, had their queries resolved and received exposure to a range of ideas from which they could benefit further. Facilitators personally nudged learners to stay engaged with the course.
(6	Leap Skills Self-learn	Under the programme, learners were taught life skills online using a Facebook group as the medium of delivery.
-	7	Leap Skills Mentorship	Under the programme, learners were taught life skills online using a Facebook group and live online sessions (Zoom) as mediums of delivery. Content uploaded on the FB group was complemented with two weekly live sessions. The sessions were conducted by the organisation's facilitators.
;	8	CMCA — GAME Graphic Cards	Learners were given graphics cards richly printed with activities and stories — eight cards over eight weeks. Each card contained seven activities to be completed by learners in the self-learn mode. Cards were distributed and collected by mentors, who visited the learners at their homes every alternate weekend, giving them two new cards at one time. Mentors uploaded pictures of the cards on a mobile application designed to check student responses and calculate the card completion percentage for each student.

2. Pilot Description

#	TERM	DEFINITION
9	Pi Jam	Under the programme, an open source Android-only mobile application, 'CodeMitra', was used. It taught computational thinking to learners using a series of videos and tasks. Tasks were based on everyday experiences that learners may have had, such as making traffic lights work, running a race, planning a day etc. Learners went through the app in a self-learn mode.
10	QUEST — Self-Learn	Under this programme, life skills were delivered in 156 ITIs in Haryana through app-based self learning accompanied by soft nudges from facilitators.
11	QUEST — Facilitated	Under this programme, life skills were delivered in 16 ITIs in Haryana through a blend of app-based self-learning and trainer-led classroom sessions by ITI trainers.
12	DEF LMS-based	Under this programme, learners received life skills training in a self-learn mode through a Learning Management System (LMS) called the Yuwaah Skills platform. Modules were accessible to learners directly on the LMS. New modules were unlocked only once the previous module was completed.
13	Magic Bus — In-school	Under this programme, life skills were delivered through immersive sessions dominated by sports-based activities. These sessions were delivered by government school teachers, trained and supported by Magic Bus-appointed School Support Officers (SSOs). These sports-based activity sessions were conducted in an external environment, and were followed by reflection sessions (Sit-Breathe-Think) in which the students brought up their life experiences and discussed takeaways with each other. Sports-based activities helped increase learner engagement as well as in imbibing life skills via first-hand experience, it was found.
14	KEF	Under the SEE Learning programme, life skills were delivered in 110 government schools in Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan. For each school, four teachers and the school principal were trained as SEE Learning ambassadors. Life skills sessions were delivered by trained government school teachers within the school timings. Each school also created an SEE Learning Environment by creating a 'Khushiyon ki Deewar' (Wall of Happiness).
15	Breakthrough	Under the 'Taaron ki Toli' programme, learners were taught content grounded in combating gender discrimination. These synchronous sessions took place in a common community space, led by a facilitator from the same community. The sessions concluded with a community messaging event, 'Kishori Samvad', in which learners delivered a gender-themed social message to their own community using various art forms such as drama, debate, rallies and so on.



STEERING COMMITTEE









TECHNICAL PARTNERS

















Samanvay

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS



























FUNDING PARTNERS









PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

