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WARD
Welfare Association for
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REVIEWING LIFE AND WORK SKILLS FOR YOUTH IN LEBANON

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACTED | Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development |
| AES | Applied Educational Systems |
| AIHR | Arab Institute for Human Rights |
| ALECSO | Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization |
| BZU | Birzeit University |
| CBT | Competency-based training |
| CERD | Center for Educational Research and Development |
| CPF | Conceptual and Programmatic Framework |
| DPDHL | Deutsche Post DHL Group |
| DRC | Danish Refugee Council |
| EC | European Commission |
| ESCO | European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications, and Occupations |
| EFA | Education for All |
| ETF | European Training Foundation |
| ETS | Educational Testing Services |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| ISTE | International Society of Technology in Education |
| IYF | International Youth Foundation |
| LSCE | Life Skills and Citizenship Education Conceptual and Programmatic Framework |
| MEHE | Ministry of Education and Higher Education |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| MF | Makhzoumi Foundation |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NRC | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| OXFAM | Oxford Committee for Famine Relief |
| P21 | Partnership for 21 st Century skills |
| SCAN | Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| ToT | Training of Trainers |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA | United Nations Fund for Population Activities |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the nearest |
| WEF | World Education Forum |
| WFP | World Food Program |
| WHO | World Health Organization |



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General Overview of Lebanon

In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the job market has become a platform that is continuously changing and progressing; therefore, the market today demands a skilled labor force that can adapt with its changes and meet its needs.


With the job market shifting, there is a demand for new skills to meet industry requirements in efficiency and production. The root of the issue traces back to educational systems which are responsible for developing these skills of innovation, imagination, and creativity. Currently, there is a mismatch between the demanded skills in the job market and what is currently being offered in educational systems. Such systems have rigid mechanisms regarding the process of updating the curricula. This hinders adapting to the changes that meet the market needs. That is to say that the market demands highly skilled laborers who possess both technical skills and *life skills* that allow them to accommodate the changes. Conversely, the educational systems focus on providing students with *technical skills* rather than incorporating life skills education as well. The breakdown and details of life skills and technical skills will be thoroughly discussed later.

In Lebanon, the market demands a skilled labor force; however, “The skills that individuals are entering the job industry with, do not meet the demanded criteria of companies who are being influenced by socio-economic trends which include the adaption of technologies”¹ as it is mentioned in the World Economic Forum Report “the future of Jobs 2018” With Lebanon's international debt exceeding 80 billion dollars (2018), is 150% of 2018 total GDP²; unemployment rates have surpassed 25% with no consolidated statistical results due to various political reasons. Therefore, 34% of Lebanese are registered as poor³ And the economic status remains stagnant due to the lack of growth where investments in both the public and private sectors are depressed. These factors result in a

¹ “The Future of Jobs 2018” World Economic Forum

²World Bank-2018

³World Bank- 2018



decrease in recruitment in the job market; consequently, increasing unemployment and poverty rates.


Lebanon's economy is also suffering from Syria's seven-year war, which curtailed an important trade and business route from one side and caused over two million refugee influx (UNHCR, 2017) into an already burdened country, increasing labor supply to the low demanding job market.

The number of potential labor supplied to the market is relatively high; nevertheless, opportunities are limited due to the lack of required skills of individuals in a different supply-demand market. It is important to note that low literacy rates among the Lebanese youth are not a factor that affects the job market. Statics demonstrate that literacy rates in Lebanon exceed 90% amongst adults and 98% amongst youth⁴ according to different statistics held by UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank.

The educational system in Lebanon is divided into three main parts: Pre-school, basic primary education, and secondary education. At the end of the secondary education every Lebanese student abiding by the Lebanese system will either get a Lebanese General Secondary Certificate from high school after the official exams made for all students across the country by MEHE, or a Technical Diploma from the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical education-GDVTE, both of which allow the access to tertiary education. Nevertheless, it is essential to mention that tertiary education in Lebanon which includes Technical and Vocational institutes in addition to the Colleges and Universities, is considered to be the 10th in the quality of education among 144 countries, according to the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report.

TVET offers numerous majors; however, the outdated curricula and the equipment do not match the needs of the market, the lack of continuous teachers training, in addition to the educational system that depends more on school-based learning and focuses more on content rather than competencies. This is not to mention the lack of market involvement in the

⁴ <http://uis.unesco.org/country/LB>



educational process, such as an absence of work-based learning, internship, and apprenticeship which make these majors either obsolete or require a lot of improvement to serve the market demands. There is a disconnect between the skills that graduates obtain from their learning institutions compared to the skills that the market needs. Moreover, the job market is continuously evolving, and it requires these personalized life skills that TVET systems are failing to incorporate into their curricula. Life skills have become just as important as technical skills in today's job market in addition to the job requirements.

The important key question arises: *which life and technical skills are demanded in the market for youth to obtain a job?*


Background and Purpose of the Report

The 21st century requires a new approach to education to meet market demands. Institutions need to be the forerunners in supporting students identify their strengths, by exploring their talents and growing their skills, instead of using traditional educational methods that no longer correspond with societal demands in our current day and age.

UNESCO, in Lebanon, has been thoroughly working on three specific areas: the promotion of “Life and Work Skills for Youth,” “Entrepreneurship Education” in the educational systems curricula, and to strengthen public-private partnerships through the preparation of studies on forecasting skills as well as the implementation of work-based learning (WBL) systems in Lebanon. With the changes in the job market and employment criteria, life and work skills become the key focus actors in the personal sustainable development of an individual in a progressive world.

Furthermore, with the increase in the awareness of the importance of quality education in schools and TVET institutions, the focus was placed on international education forums and the 2030 Education SDG goals on Life skills.⁵ With the TVET sector being an important aspect of an economy, life

⁵ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Summit 2015



and work skills should be an essential part of its curricula to allow this sector to advance sustainably. As for Lebanon, the TVET sector requires a strategic plan to equip its students with quality education in which life and work skills can be developed, ultimately enabling them to compete in the job market and increase their chances in employability.


Mismatch between the TVET education and market needs

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are understood as a comprising education, based on training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services, and livelihoods.⁶

In Lebanon, there is a huge gap between the market and TVET sector regardless of the initiative to improve the situation. The market is rapidly shifting while the educational system structure is semi-stagnant and only progresses transitionally. Moreover, the market is mostly based on small and medium enterprises with limited ability to employ. There is a continuous change in the skills demanded by these enterprises due to high competition between them. An Institution has to teach various materials due to the differences found in market needs; therefore, causing them to broaden the education delivered, which in turn generalizes the studies and ends up not serving the market needs or student needs. In other words, delivering technical skills to a great number of students without life skills does not portray jobs market demands.

Due to socio-cultural and educational reasons, most Lebanese citizens prefer a university diploma over technical and vocational education and training (TVET) diploma regardless of the skills and qualifications delivered by the educational institute, acquired by the students and demanded by the market. First and foremost, from a socio-cultural perspective, university

⁶UNESCO -2015



degrees have a higher rank and appreciation in the Lebanese mentality while TVET education is perceived negatively thus traditional university career paths are considered a great asset for a successful future. Lebanon has strong and high-ranking universities, whose students are a source of great competition in the job market and are better guided than those in the TVET sector.


TVET institutions are a limited sector from the sense of offering opportunities to its students due to the rigid curriculum. Moreover, students enrolled in TVET sector do not benefit from appropriate career orientation within their institutions due to the lack of market assessment studies which should reveal the gaps that need to be filled in the different sectors and fields. This leads to an enormous mismatch between demand and supply in the labor market, ultimately impeding graduates attempts to find decent job opportunities. However, technical and vocational education and training sector is an essential sector of education that highly contributes to a country's economy.

Life-skills based education is a combination of delivering students with not only knowledge and attitudes but also skills that enable them to take effective decisions, correct positive actions, and change behaviors in different environments⁷

Attention for the importance of skills development has mostly been given to general education systems; however, technical and vocational education and training has an equally essential share in skills development. According to ILO: "demand-driven quality TVET and skills development in schools is essential and prove that they allow young people to be equipped with the needed skills to succeed."⁸ Thus *core work* and life skills are a great significance in the TVET sector, where they enhance employability for learners and job seekers.

7. This definition is drawn from UNICEF's definition of 'skills-based health education', as 'life skills-based education' is defined as "a term often used almost interchangeably with skills-based health education" apart from content, which, in addition to health, includes, for example, "life skills-based literacy and numeracy, or life skills-based peace education, or human rights."

⁸ILO-2015



According to UNESCO, TVET systems today are not sufficient in supporting the development of “*soft skills*” in their curricula; This being the reason why it is essential to start properly intruding and integrating TVET systems to benefit the young generation. Similarly, even if skills are identified in the curricula of various developed and developing countries around the world, the delivery process is still lacking.⁹

In a recent cross-country analysis in the Asia-Pacific region, UNESCO summarized the major challenges in the implementation of skills within the TVET sector, which is an issue that is faced in this sector in general; the results were as follows:¹⁰

- Disagreement on responsibility for imparting *transferable skills* in TVET
- Rigid and heavy curricula that impede innovative teaching and learning
- Lack of capacity to develop and/or apply innovative teaching methods
- Lack of adequate assessment methods

Transferable or transversal skills are the main skills needed in TVET sector and are thus defined according to UNESCO as Those typically considered as not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge but as skills that can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings. These skills are increasingly in high demand for learners to successfully adapt to changes and to lead meaningful and productive lives.¹¹


Adding up the definition of ‘*transversal competencies*’ there are six domains:

1. Critical and innovative thinking,
2. *Interpersonal skills* (verbal or non-verbal communication, problem-solving, assertiveness, etc.)

9 UNESCO 2015- Skills implementation in TVET

10 UNESCO- 2014 cross country TVET analysis in Asia- Pacific Region.

11 UNESCO- 2014 transversal skills

- 
3. *Intrapersonal skills* (self-confidence, self-motivation, self-discipline...)
 4. Global citizenship,
 5. Media and Information Literacy,
 6. Others.¹²

The European Commission (EC) cited in 2011 that the challenge to introduce and implement life skills in systems is because there is a problem in the delivery of a clear, unified conceptual framework that defines and assesses them. Hence the challenge in transferable skills implementation is in how its' viewed and analyzed by the different stakeholders.

The ideal common way to consolidate *transversal skills* is to integrate them into the traditional and TVET education systems curricula. To overcome the challenges of implementing *transversal skills*, it is best to provide clear guidelines for their application.


Introduction to Life Skills Concept

Countries across the world aim to improve both youth employment and productivity of enterprises through creating various strategies in the hopes of achieving these goals. These outcomes share a similar core that is required for their accomplishment, which is known as life skills. For men and women today to find jobs they must acquire proper education and *technical skills* to perform their work tasks, but also, must acquire *core work* and *life skills* that enable them to deliver their functions efficiently, effectivity, and by overcoming any possible obstacles¹³. Life skills will be defined and discussed thoroughly further in this document, although there is no standard definition for it is a flexible, elastic, diverse concept that involves a vast amount of knowledge and skills.¹⁴

¹² The domain 'others' was created as a way for researchers to include competencies, such as physical health or religious values that may not fall into one of the other

¹³ ILO-2015

¹⁴ UNICEF; Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programs- pdf (2012)



Globalization introduced new technologies in the early 20th century; Furthermore, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is a new era today, has taken these new technologies as implementation to create new forms of work, reorganize work structure and contribute to the overall growth of the service sector. These changes in the labor market demand the rise of *core skills* and *life skills*.

The importance of life skills lies in "the personal, interpersonal, and cognitive, psychosocial skills that allow a person to interact appropriately, self-emotional management, and make decisions and choices for an active, safe and productive life." ¹⁵

Teaching life skills begins in the early stages of an individual's life and continues throughout his/her education. Since life-skills based education is essential, it is beneficial to the learning of each; therefore, should be introduced into school curriculums. Nevertheless, refocusing and refining the traditional education system over time has resulted in like-skills based education to be squeezed out of curriculums.

Post-2015 Education Goals shed the lights on the importance of life skills and how it was more of a conceptual theory, but rather, a theory in practice.¹⁶ Even after the EFA, life skills introduction to school environments and outside schools was limited and inefficient, especially in secondary education. Goal number three in the 2015 Educational Goals in EFA discussed Youth and Adults Skills, yet implementation was limited.¹⁷


Quality education, being a 2030 Sustainable Development Goal serves to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Its articles focus on three pillars being, cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral learning objectives. ¹⁸

¹⁵ UNICEF-2012

¹⁶ Education for All-Conference

¹⁷ Education for All; Achievements and Challenges./ EFA Global Monitoring Report. 2000-2015

¹⁸Education for Sustainable Development Goals. 2030- UNESCO



2030 Education SDG goals: a framework for action was formulated towards a new vision for education. It emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning opportunities, through quality education that incorporates skills in order to create job opportunities for youth better. It also focuses on inclusion and equity in and through education to eliminate institutional discriminations disparities and inequalities. One of the sustainable development Goals, goal number 4, states that by 2030, the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills including technical and vocational skills for employment and entrepreneurship is to be increased substantially (UNESCO,2015)¹⁹. Other targets include that by 2030, it is essential to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, and lifestyles. All goals and targets were placed taking into consideration the lessons learned in the 2015 SDG for education. Therefore, strategic approaches were developed to ensure implementation and achievement of the above-stated goals, which are as follows:


1. Strengthening policies, plans, and legislation systems
2. Emphasizing on equity, inclusion and gender equality,
3. Focusing on quality and learning, promoting lifelong learning
4. Addressing education in emergency situations.²⁰

The Emergence of Life Skills Concept

Education For All, an international interagency initiative launched in 1990, by United Nations Agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP), World Bank, and World Health Organization, reflecting the concerns over the inadequate education systems around the world, that are not meeting the basic student learning needs hindering proper progress in life. This initiative, alongside Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, contributed to the World Conference on Education for All that was held in Jomtien, Thailand in March of 1990 with the participation of 155 countries (UNESCO, 1994).

¹⁹ September 25, 2015

²⁰ Education 2030- Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4



Basic learning needs are met through educational opportunities, for students encompassing two essential pillars. The first being the principal learning tools (literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving) and the second being the essential learning content (knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes), as stated in article one of the purpose of Education for all-conference.

The conference aim was providing guidelines for stakeholders (governments, International Organizations, professionals, educators) to improve basic education services (UNESCO, 1994). The outcome, therefore, was to create the framework (for the stakeholders) to build their implementation plans accordingly or use it to develop their programs and plans.

Ten years later, an assessment for the status of education the World Education Forum was held in 2000, ten years after, in Dakar, Senegal. Progress was made since the first conference such as the increase in enrollment rates and literacy among adults, besides, to decrease in school dropouts. Hence, the World Education Forum (WEF), also emphasized the importance of education and created an action plan to fulfill certain educational goals in 2015 (WEF, 2000). The Forum thus focused on assessing learning achievements and content-based material. Quality education is an essential goal thus conference prioritized the development of a conceptual framework and methodologies for assessing life skills.

Recently in October 2017, Life Skills and Citizenship Education Conceptual and Programmatic Framework were held in Jordan, by all international organizations to discuss life skills in the Middle East and North Africa Region and the importance of its administration in the educational systems. This will later be discussed thoroughly in the report.




Terminologies

As a term, *Life Skills* combines the various kinds of "skills" which are defined as the ability to carry out tasks in an efficient manner and a certain amount of time, coming from one's knowledge, practice, and aptitude. Therefore, life skills are the sum of personal, practical, social, knowledge, critical, and survival skills that promote the progress of a person. That is to say, they allow him/her to deal with and overcome life challenges and sustainably develop oneself. However, the skills needed in the market are technical skills related to executing the job, also related to *hard skills* that are tangible and can be taught as opposed to "*soft skills*." These soft skills have been tackled by various organizations, defining them in terms, names, such as *life, soft, core*, etc. These terms have similar definitions yet sometimes are interrelated to "hard" skills.

Life skills as identified by *UNESCO* are: "a group of cognitive, personal and interpersonal abilities that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives healthily and productively." Initially, life skills were closely linked to promoting better health and providing awareness for children. They were identified by the World Health Organization- *WHO* in 1997 as the "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life."

Thus *UNICEF, UNDP and WHO* also identifies life skills as psychological abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. When analyzing the meaning of "adaptive," it means that a person can flexibly adjust himself in different circumstances of life; moreover, keeping a "positive behavior" which implies that a person is overlooking obstacles and searching for opportunities to find the best solutions confidently.



The *World Bank* (2013), considers that “Life skills are designed to teach a broad set of social and behavioral skills- also referred to as "**soft**" or "**non-cognitive**" skills that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life." Thus life skill programs empower and guide learners to think critically about how gender norms and human rights govern their interactions with others and affect their behaviors.

Life skills were first closely identified with health awareness and prevention, yet they are not related to a certain topic or subject, rather combining each aspect of human life including daily routines and tasks.


The importance of teaching student’s life skills in their educational journey lies in the fact that it builds on:

- Decision-making process where an individual gains creative and critical thinking that enhance problem-solving
- Personal awareness and self-management where one consolidates self-esteem, self-awareness, stress management, emotional intelligence, and sexual awareness and reproductive health.
- Community living through effective communication, building healthy relationships, resisting peer pressure, etc.²¹

A recent study conducted by the World Bank revealed that psychosocial competencies emotively referred to as ‘power within’ which also include resilience, personal agency, and self-confidence, can help a person move up and out of poverty. ²²

Life skills have a positive effect on education and the labor market outcomes where studies done in developed countries have shown that non-cognitive teachings are an essential part of learning progress (Farington, 2012). When applying to jobs in organizations or corporations, a particular emphasis is placed in common among all job descriptions being “**interpersonal skills**” that are apart from the applicant’s education and work experiences. Interpersonal skills are considered an important aspect of

²¹ World Bank, 2013



recruitment demanded by employers. These core competency work skills are characterized as skills that allow a person to be an added value to the workplace²³; consequently, what employers look for is evidence of creativity, teamwork, client or beneficiary oriented, cross-cultural communication abilities, function under stress, decision making, problem-solving, flexibility, time management, leadership, digital literacy, etc.

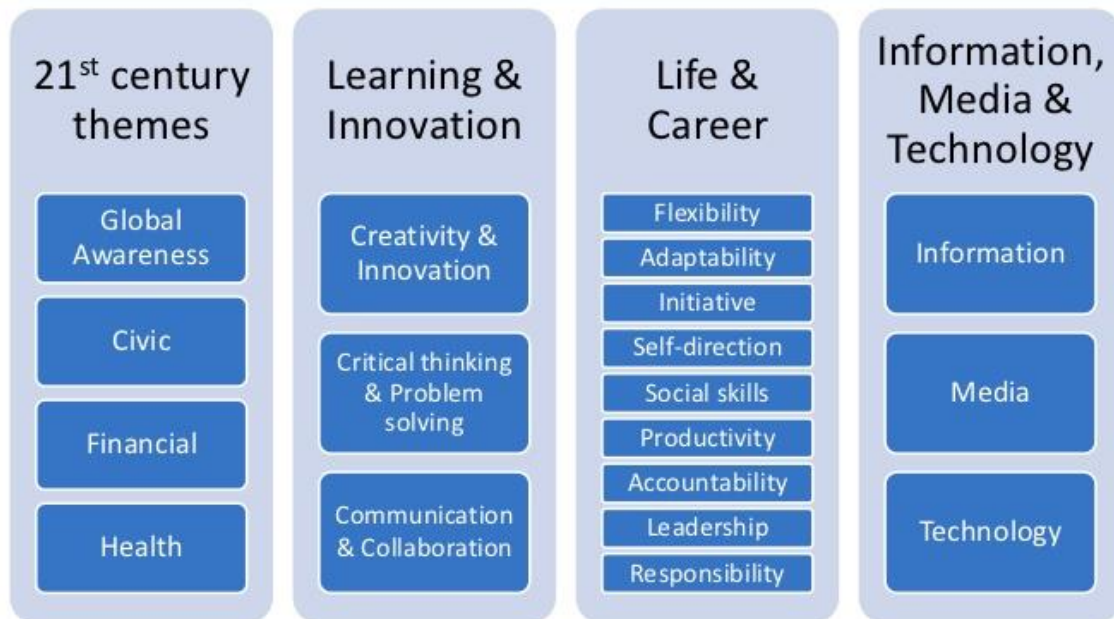
The Fourth Industrial Revolution requires new skills in the market which have not yet been incorporated into educational systems; causing what is known as skills mismatch between the needed skills in the market and the skills supplied. Skills mismatch according to the European Union Commission is the "situation in the labor market where the level of skills of individuals does not match the level of *work skills* required in the jobs."

These work skills if combined, as stated by Applied Educational Systems, are thus presented under the umbrella of what is known as "*21st-century skills*" today. As represented below in figure (1), in the light of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, applicants are expected to have these specific characteristics or develop their personal capacity to achieve them.²⁴

²³ work skills lists – UN careers

²⁴AES.<https://www.aeseducation.com/careercenter21/what-are-21st-century-skills>

Definition of 21st century skills



Based on Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) Framework



Table 1: 21st-century skills

As mentioned above, life and work skills are interrelated, yet there are “**core competency skills**” that are the major skills that a person should have as characteristics which give him/her the added value over other applicants in the labor market. **International Labour Organization- ILO** (2016) defines core competencies as capabilities that are important for success in employment and life. The main core competencies or skills are maintaining professionalism in the workplace, effective communication with the team, problem-solving abilities, being sustainable while delivering tasks, self-motivated, creative, and have an organized plan for work.²⁵

Core skills are part of the soft skills; as defined by Harvard: “soft skills are interpersonal skills that you can use to enhance your **technical skills** and

²⁵ International Labour Organization- 2016

day-to-day job functions." Such skills are affiliated with personalities, where some individuals already have them as personal characteristics, yet they can still be gained and learned through "life skills programs."

Soft skills are as essential as hard skills that represent having knowledge, technological skills, and being practical (Thompson, 2017); as some studies showed such as the research conducted by Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation has done in, and Stanford Research Center did in 2017, soft skills are responsible for 85% of career successes, while only 15% is attributed to hard skills.

As mentioned above, life skills are not related to a certain subject; the same goes for transversal skills. As defined by UNESCO- UNEVOC, transversal/ transferable skills are "skills that are typically considered as not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge and that can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings."

Moreover, European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications, and Occupations - *ESCO* states that the transversal skills are: "cornerstone for the personal development of a person. Transversal knowledge, skills and competencies are the building blocks for the development of the "hard" skills and competencies required to succeed in the labor market." Examples of this include social media literacy, critical thinking, global citizenship (openness, diversity respect, acceptance of different cultures), etc.


The table hereafter thus summaries the definitions given by various International NGOs and institutions.

| Agency/ Institution | Definitions |
|---------------------|--|
| UNESCO | Life skills are a group of cognitive, personal and interpersonal abilities that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner |
| ESCO | Transversal knowledge, skills, and competencies are the building blocks for the development of the |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | "hard" skills and competencies required to succeed in the labor market. |
| WHO | Life skills as psychological abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life |
| LSCE/ UNICEF/ UNDP | Life skills as psychological abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life |
| ILO | Core competencies as capabilities that are important for success in employment and life. |
| World Bank | Life skills are designed to teach a broad set of social and behavioral skills- also referred to as " <i>soft</i> " or " <i>non-cognitive</i> " skills that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life |

Table 2: Definitions by INGOs

Based on these definitions mentioned above, the table below shows the correlation between the different mentioned terminologies.



As viewed above in the table *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* skills are an essential part in the formation of transferable skills. The characteristics that interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are composed of are listed below:


- ***Interpersonal skills:*** Body language & gestures, Dependability, Listen carefully, open to feedback, Professionalism, Respectfulness, Relationship management, Self- confidence, Show appreciation, showing positivity, working collaboratively, & Work etiquette.
- ***Intrapersonal skills:*** Ability to control unexpected emotions like anger and frustration; Knowing what drives, motivates, frustrates, inspires you; Knowing your own strengths and limitations; Initiative; Persistence and perseverance in challenging situations; Resilience and ability to bounce back from setbacks; Self-confidence; Taking responsibility; Taking measured risks; The ability to forgive and forget; The ability to stay calm and balanced in stressful situations.

All the skills mentioned above are skills needed in the labor market that combine all types of life skills to fulfill the market needs and ongoing progress. Hence labor market skills forecasting is essential to analyze and adapt to market needs and improve labor performances.

Consequently, here lies the importance of life skills programs that not only improve labor performances but to create sustainable development and positive impacts on economies. The relevance in teaching these skills to TVET students is an asset to their education and employability.

Life Skills in the MENA Region

A regional launch for life skills in the MENA region was announced in the Life Skills, and Citizenship Education Conceptual and Programmatic Framework was held in October 2017 in Jordan. Initially, the LSCE initiative was launched in 2015, in the MENA region with the aim of supporting the countries of the region - conceptually, programmatically and technically - to facilitate learning more effectively and invest such



learning more strategically in individual, social and economic development.²⁶

The LSCE is led by the United Nations Children’s Fund in collaboration with partners at country, regional and global levels. It is an active contribution of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), along with ministries of education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries. Its partners are Regional and global partners include Aflatoun International, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), Birzeit University (BZU), Deutsche Post DHL Group (DPDHL), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) was designed by the LSCE initiative to guide all strategies, and policies related to life skills and citizenship education in the context of national education reforms. According to the LSCE report of 2017: "The CPF is a roadmap for the mobilization of all partners through modalities which create enabling environments for better learning towards youth, that branch in education, on the roads to the workplace, and in the workplace, in a view that reaches all students/ children.

The MENA region needs technical assistance in order to introduce life skills in the educational system properly.

²⁶UNICEF – LSCE report 2015

| LSCE equips learners: | In the context of these interrelated challenges: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create meaning out of knowledge and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills deficit: low learning outcomes; traditional teaching and learning |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To face the transitions from childhood to adulthood and... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills mismatch: inverse correlation between education and employment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From education to work and... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value deficit: an erosion of social cohesion; conflict and violence |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disempowerment: children and young people are not trained to manage their emotions and communicate them constructively; they are not self-aware and do not persevere in school, work, and life |


Table 4: Context of LSCE's work focus

The Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF) focuses on learning to:

- Know (Cognitive Dimension)
- Be (Individual Dimension)
- Do (Instrumental Dimension)
- Live Together (Social Dimension)

Each dimension although interrelated in theory & practice, must co-exist includes various skills:

- *Cognitive Dimension*: Including skills for learning; recognizing that learning is not just about knowledge acquisition but how to handle knowledge critically.
- *Individual Dimension*, including skills for empowerment and fulfillment in personal life.
- *Instrumental Dimension*, including skills for employability; incorporating the key life skills required to perform well in the workplace.

- 
- *Social Dimension*, including skills for active citizenship; centering on values and human rights, which underpin all four learning dimensions.

Life skills are defined within the CPF as cognitive and non-cognitive, higher-order, transversal and transferable skills for learning, employability, personal empowerment, and active citizenship. CPF also states active citizenship education is an integral component of life skills education. Active citizen education emphasizes the need for social transformation and refers to the capabilities and energies that can foster open societies, harness the enthusiasm and motivation of younger generations, and provide them with the tools to build a better future for their communities and the region. Thus, CPF identified twelve core life skills in addition to the 21st-century skills, that are essential for proper learning and employment opportunities for students and should be delivered in all forms of education (general and TVET) specifically based on the four dimensions of learning that were listed above.

Below is the chart representation of the 12 core skills that students should acquire for better employability and success according to LSCE)

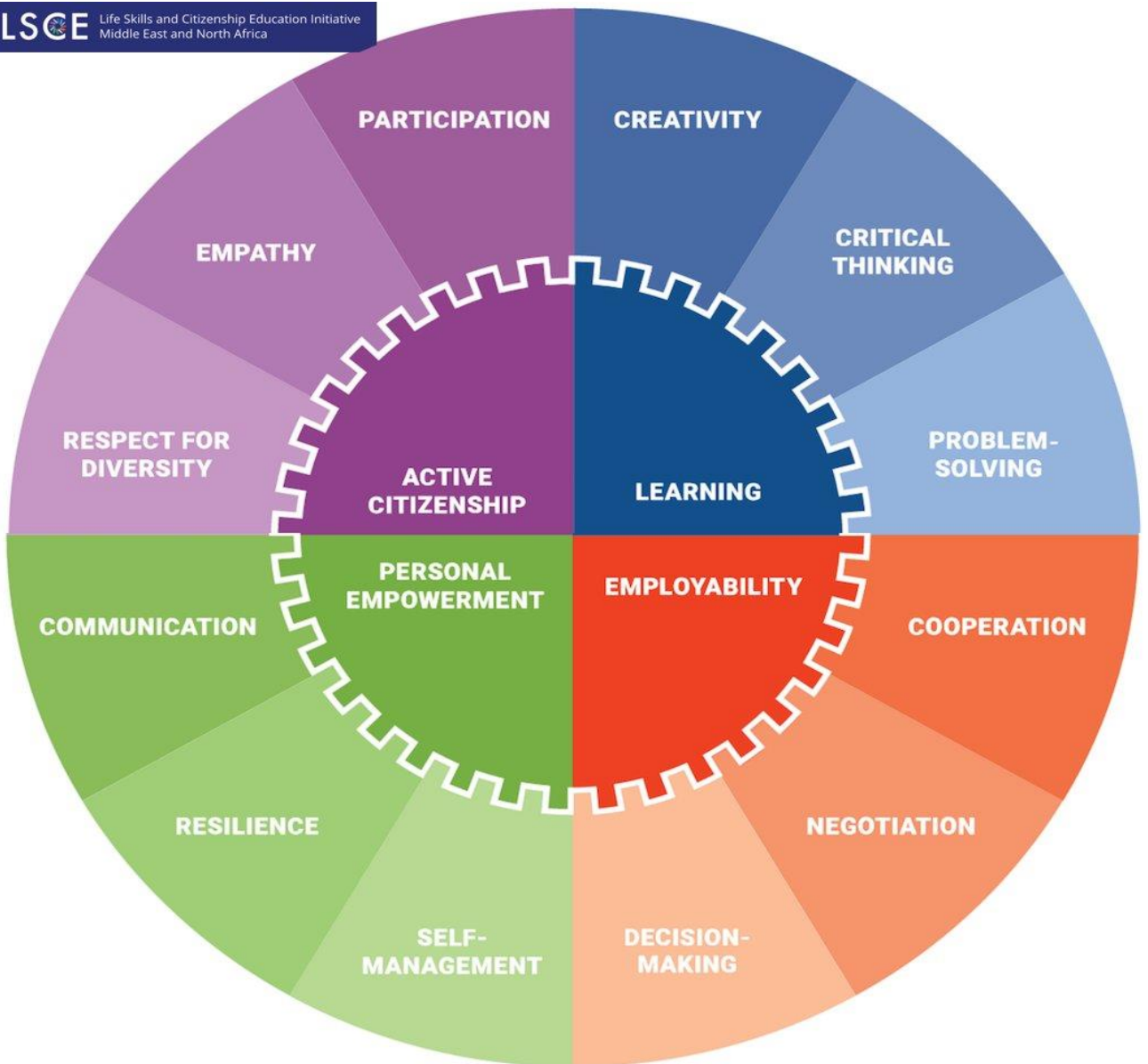


Chart 1: The 12 Core Skills - LSCE

The table below shows a summary of some of the “life skills” mentioned by the different INGOs and Agencies.

| | Communication | Creativity | Critical thinking | Problem-solving | Decision making | Cooperation and | Self-management | Resilience | Negotiation | Respect for diversity | Empathy | Participation | ICT literacy | Information literacy | Life and Career | Environment/ Entrepreneurship | Citizenship | Personal & Social | Leadership | HIV awareness | Assertiveness | Interpersonal skills | Emotional intelligence | Self-awareness | Intrapersonal skills* | Work ethic | Flexibility | Adaptability | Initiative | Self-direction | Productivity | Accountability | Media | Social skills | |
|--|---------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-------|---------------|---|
| WHO | X | X | | X | X | | X | | | X | | | | | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UNESCO | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | X | X | | X | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| UNICEF/LS CE | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AES (21 st century skills) | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | X | X | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Table 5: summary of all the “life skills” mentioned by the different INGOs



Life Skills in Lebanon

In Lebanon, the countries stand for reforms and points of action, which is through both the Center for Educational Research and Development and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) stated that reforms and actions should be taken through the advancement of high-quality education in line with the 2030 Education SDGs, which is to be introduced to all generations²⁷. CERD continued by declaring that cooperating with other agencies is a must to improve textbooks and produce citizens who respect the rule of law and have critical thinking. Also, they created a community service manual that helps learners discover their personal identity, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). They also declared the importance of improving the quality of teachers' orientation and development, which in turn establishes life skills and citizenship education programs for adults.

In turn, the MEHE also reaffirmed the importance of updating and amending the existing textbooks to make students strong critical thinkers with highly interactive qualities. They also acknowledged the obligation to target disabled individuals and provide them with equipped schools that meet their needs²⁸. The MEHE continued by stating that the Department of Basic Education will be focusing on *basic life skills* such as time management, self-management, and proper communication. The ministry also indicated that it would be working with UNICEF to provide life skills and psychosocial support to non-Lebanese students, as a response to the neighboring countries political situations.

Regarding the technical and vocational education sector challenges regarding introducing life skills and the sector in general, the issue in Lebanon is a common issue in the MENA region as a whole where challenges are listed as below according to the LSCE report of 2017:

²⁷ LSCE conference – October 2017


²⁸ LSCE conference – October 2017

- Lack of skilled labor: There are currently not enough students pursuing TVET. For those who do take this route, there are limited pathways available for progressing from one type of TVET to others.
- Labor-market orientation: The private sector does not currently play a significant role in TVET. Training levels and the extent of industry experience of TVET instructors is insufficient, and funding is inadequate. Recruiting TVET trainers from companies were suggested as a solution to this skills deficit.
- Limited coordination: There is no single entity supervising and setting standards for TVET provision.
- Insufficient resources: Trainer capabilities and facilities are currently inadequate for the provision of labor-market-oriented TVET. A further challenge is that graduates are often ill-equipped to teach TVET, as they have theoretical grounding but are not experienced in practical application.
- Inferior perception: TVET is not considered a pathway to success in MENA. Being either a TVET trainee or TVET teacher is deemed to be low status. One of the main challenges in MENA is that there are plenty of well-qualified people but most jobs are semi-skilled and, as such, not valued.

Therefore, as mentioned earlier in this report, LSCE also discussed the essentiality in teaching TVET students *transferable skills*.

The TVET providers in Lebanon come from the public sector and the private sector. The private sector includes non-governmental training institutions and private-for-profit training. The majority of training providers are seen to be predominantly supply-led and out of touch with the changing demands of the labor market.

Regardless of the TVET curricula upgrade that was undertaken in Lebanon from 2014 to 2016's, no significant achievements were done on the development of evaluation tools to measure progress, neither were teacher and student guides prepared.



Examinations in vocational streams still tend to be biased towards academic knowledge and do not provide an adequate assessment of practical skills and employability. Therefore, during job interviews, students showed weak employability skills of graduates, such as teamwork, poor communication ability and lack of initiative and analytical skills. This highlighted the skills gap in the TVET sector, which in turn does not serve the demand of the market. Thus, the absence of transversal skills being taught in Lebanon was a major issue for the development of the TVET sector. Skills were being attained through apprenticeship training or on- job training.


Recently, life skills programs are being introduced minimally through various projects implemented through international NGO's, and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Since Lebanon has been a host country for refugees over the past six years; programs have been introduced to ensure underprivileged Lebanese, and refugee communities have better access to quality education and a better knowledge towards life skills. Moreover, programs targeted youth that dropped out of schools, in an attempt to provide them with skills that enable them to work properly. However, the application of life and work skills in all the forms of educational systems is still challenging.

A various number of the large NGO's in Lebanon are working on basic skills implementation, such as the accelerated vocational training projects done in various areas by NGO partnerships, mostly targeting people with low educational achievements, especially women. The topics discussed in the programs, include children rights, working as a team, literacy, sexually transmitted diseases, all being part of the TVET and personal development packages.²⁹

For instance, the ILO in partnership with UNICEF has launched a project in 2017 aiming to formal and non-formal technical and vocational education in Lebanon, where outcomes are going to be focused on meeting market needs and improving quality education. Ultimately, focusing on competency-based training (CBT), where it is developed as a manual inclusive of a standard framework for life skills and rights at work learning objectives for Lebanon.³⁰

²⁹ Reforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the MENA: Experiences and Challenges. ETF and World Bank- 2005 report.

³⁰ILO and UNICEF joint program: towards improved formal and non-formal Technical & Vocational Education Training in Lebanon. Launched in January 2017- June 2019



Other studies done in Lebanon were a consortium between DRC, MF, Save the Children, Oxfam, Care, and ACTED. This study focused on the soft skills gap and general skills needed for the market demands. It focused on the importance of promoting better communication skills, supporting workplace ethics, increase the level of commitment, teamwork, diligence, and client relations. Report discussed the problem of lack of communication skills between the TVET and the market, in addition to the lack of instructional skills by the TVET teachers who are professionals that create their curricula based on their experiences.³¹

UNICEF had development programs for adolescent and children in disadvantaged and emergency-affected areas in 2013-2014, to ensure that they have access to quality education and have a better understanding on life skills. These programs were in partnership with MEHE, CERD, UNFPA, Save the Children, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, and local NGOs. The intervention made sure children have access to formal or informal education in a safe environment. The programs targeted knowledge of life skills, and HIV awareness, in addition to improving the practice of healthy behaviors of adolescents.³²

Other educational programs operated by UNICEF are also enhancing the quality of education in the public sector in the marginalized areas around Lebanon, for both the host communities and refugees. In partnership with the MEHE, World Vision, local NGOs, and academic institutions, in addition to selected regions in North, South, and Akkar.

Taawon, a local NGO, is closely working with youth on a life skills program- LIFE in a welcoming environment for education where they work on the quality of education, self-confidence of the students.

Moreover, Save the Children has three months life skills training program targeting both Syrian refugees and Lebanese host community. The program offered life skills training, and training in community research skills, project planning, and budgeting, before designing and implementing their project to meet an identified need in the community, such as planting two hundred trees.

³¹Consortium Report

³²UNICEF 2013-2014 – Life Skills for Adolescents



Life and Work Skills

INGOs and agencies, as well as some local NGOs, have been focusing on Life skills to respond for some needs mainly emerging from negative or crisis situation; even if they intended to cover the skills needed in the Work life, they didn't mention it "literally."

Meanwhile, some international and local initiatives and programs have tackled the issue of "Life and Work Skills" (SCANS, P21 program, ILO, ETF, British Council, UNESCO, WARD) in line with their objectives and visions and field of work/areas of interest.

In 1991, in the USA, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) had issued a report on "What Work Requires of Schools³³" and has determined the "skills needed for young people to succeed in the Workplace" to foster a high-performance economy. The report mentioned some fundamental skills as well as five workplace competencies.

The fundamentals skills are:

- Basic Skills: reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks.
- Thinking Skills: thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons
- Personal Qualities: displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty

The five Workplace Competencies are:

- Resources: identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources
- Interpersonal: works with others (participates as a member of a team, teaches others new skills, serves clients/customers, exercises leadership, negotiates, works with diversity)
- Information: Acquires and uses information (acquires and evaluates, organizes and maintains, and interprets and communicates information; uses computers to process information)

³³ <https://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS/whatwork/>

- Systems: understands complex inter-relationships (understands systems, monitors and corrects performance, improves or designs systems)
- Technology: works with a variety of technologies (selects technology, applies technology to a task, maintains and troubleshoots equipment)

In 2002, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) was founded as an NGO regrouping different stakeholder from the education sector, the business community, policymakers, aiming to foster the discussions on the 21st-century skills for all students. They identified what it was known as "the 4Cs": Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Critical thinking. Based on this, many studies and initiatives have been conducted and with numerous definitions cited.


The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) and the Metiri Group issued a report entitled "enGauge® 21st Century Skills: Literacy in the Digital Age³⁴". The report called for policymakers and educators to define 21st century skills, and to provide a common understanding of, and language for discussing, the needs of students, citizens, and workers in a modern digital society, the report identified four "skill clusters": Digital-Age Literacy, Inventive Thinking, Effective Communication, and High Productivity.

Aiming to integrate workplace with education, the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) has set their standards, which are intermixed with ICT Skills. They issued a series of six performance indicators: Creativity and Innovation, Communication and Collaboration, Research and Information Fluency, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making, Digital Citizenship, Technology Operations, and Concepts.

In the same issue, The Educational Testing Services (ETS) ICT panel realized its "digital literacy standards³⁵: The ICT proficiencies (cognitive and Technical proficiencies). They considered that a person has to be able to: access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create, publish, present information using digital tools.

³⁴ <https://pict.sdsu.edu/engauge21st.pdf>

³⁵ https://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/Information_and_Communication_Technology_Literacy/ictreport.pdf



Tony Wagner, in 2008, mentioned seven survival Skills³⁶ needed for modern Workplace:


- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analyzing information
- Curiosity and imagination

ILO has its own program called "Skills for employability," where the ILO works with ministries of labor, employers' organizations, and trade unions to integrate skills development into national and sector development strategies to better meet current labor market needs and to prepare for the jobs of the future. Their work on skills development is guided by the conceptual framework on skills to improve productivity, employment growth, and development. Research, policy advice, pilot projects, and technical cooperation programs apply good practice aims to boost the employability of workers, the productivity competitiveness of enterprises, and the inclusiveness of economic growth. Among skills promoted by ILO, Entrepreneurship is a fundamental characteristic where several programs and methodologies such as KAB were conducted in different countries enhancing the transition between school and work.

British Council "Skills for Employability" program aims to share the UK's experience, knowledge and expertise to help enhance the skills and employability of young people. It encourages closer links between education, employers, and policymakers to broaden the youth horizons and equip them with the skills needed to face today's global and multicultural world of work.

From the British council point of view, a sufficiently skilled person is a one equipped with: core skills: (communication, numeracy, literacy and ICT skills), employability skills (teamwork; problem solving; initiative; planning and organizing; entrepreneurial thinking; self-management and learning), and vocational skills (empirical skills that individuals acquire in a specific area of interest).

³⁶ <http://www.tonywagner.com/7-survival-skills/>



In October 2014, the UNESCO- UNEVOC organized a global forum on "Skills for work and life: post-2015"³⁷.

The Global Forum paid particular attention to the more immediate needs of young people as they seek to make successful transitions to adulthood and decent work.

It focused on the greening issue which was found to behave numerous challenges in this field which brings "major opportunities for TVET, this also means massive skills opportunities, then many million new green jobs have come into existence during this decade"³⁸.

The forum emphasized the aspect that "TVET must be linked not only with the world of work, but also with creating pathways across education streams, and facilitating transitions to work and to life."


One of the recommendations of this forum was to ease transitions from school to work by sharing information, building trust and harnessing technological possibilities. The possibilities of new ICTs are being used to get appropriate information about labor markets and TVET courses to young people. It considered that "entrepreneurship cannot be the answer to the whole of the young unemployment challenge," but that there is a great scope for increasing entrepreneurial skills and awareness among young people." Moreover, skills are considered vital for employability, productivity, and competitiveness. They support the broader work of human development, help societal integration and contribute to the building of identities.

Digital skills were always an important issue and seemed to be very crucial; in fact, according to Mrs. Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO "recent analysis shows that, within developed economies, 90% of jobs require some level of digital skills, while more than one third of the labor force has a minimal ability to use ICT productively. Digital skills are no less crucial in developing countries. To tackle when talking about work-life"³⁹.

³⁷ https://unevoc.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/pubs/UNEVOC-Skills-for-work-and-life-post-2015.pdf

³⁸ https://unevoc.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/pubs/UNEVOC-Skills-for-work-and-life-post-2015.pdf

³⁹ Working Group on Education: Digital skills for life and work - September 2017



The development of digital skills for life and work is a need, lately, in September 2017, the Broadband Commission Working Group on Education co-chaired by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO and John Galvin, Vice President of Intel have issued a critical report in this field; it contains a desk-based research and reflects inputs/ case studies that form the compendium of promising practices.


Digital skills must be defined and developed within, and beyond formal curricula, the main objectives would be:

- (1) To communicate, collaborate, and share information;
- (2) Find, manage and store digital information and content securely;
- (3) Register and apply for services, such as buy and sell goods and services online;
- (4) Using digital tools and online services in order to find solutions to problems and to get new knowledge essential to execute his work;
- (5) Stay safe, legal and confident online.

Life and Work Skills in Lebanon

In Lebanon, local and INGOs reflected the importance of linking Life skills to Work skills; but, every entity has applied its own vision for that. Mainly, initiatives focused more on the Entrepreneurship due to its significant impact on employment. Therefore, this subject was tackled by a different entity (local and International NGOs and governmental bodies) and that by applying and adapting their own programs to the Lebanese situation.

- The British Council in collaboration with CERD has implemented its own program "Skills for Employability" in a TVET school. It consists on training teachers on Entrepreneurship and Employability skills to adopt a specialized content and deliver it to the students.
- ILO, ETF, and UNESCO, worked jointly (in 2012) in a project to integrate Entrepreneurship into curricula. ToT sessions for teachers from general education as well as from TVET schools and institutes were conducted. Teachers were trained to apply the KAB - ILO methodology and the resources prepared by KAB, UNESCO and CERD. UNESCO with CERD has elaborated curriculum and content about



Besides its importance as the main subject to be taught leading to bridge the gap between Education and workplace, Entrepreneurship by itself could not lead directly to that end.

In 2016, and in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office, WARD NGO has implemented a pilot experience in integrating work and life skills into accelerated vocational training courses. The integration was carried out through the preparation of a particular training module that was added to the "usual" technical training module. It was mainly based on three main pillars:

- The life skills such as negotiation, listening, communication, self-management, work ethic, work, environment, and greening.
- Digital skills: such as the use of technology, equipment and means of communication for work purpose, Internet, search engines and searching techniques, writing reports and correspondence ...
- Entrepreneurial skills: such as initial steps to establish and manage a project, preparing a CV, laws, project financing methods, risk calculation, the organization of the workplace

Other programs are being given to Syrian Refugees mainly women, in areas such as Beqaa, Beirut, South, North focusing on specific topics such as computer literacy or discussing topics such as reproductive health, gender-based violence. Mostly they are being given by local non-governmental organizations such as Safadi Foundation, Rene Moawad Foundation, Makhzoumi foundation.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Makhzoumi Foundation programs

Conclusion

It is clear that a “Tower of Babel’s⁴¹” situation is set when talking about life skills, core skills, life and work skills, skills for employment and employability, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Various non-governmental organizations are creating life skills programs for refugees and host communities. The programs are overlapping in some points and complementary in others.

What is good to mention is that INGOs have worked jointly and set some unified definitions and frameworks mostly consistent concerning what should be added to the curriculum. However, each group/ NGO has different areas of emphasis within the overarching skillset.


Meanwhile, the questions remain: Are all these skills needed for the TVET student to be willing to be engaged in the market? And, does the market need all these skills and at what level?

A strategic plan should be set to properly incorporate life skills into the TVET sector curricula whether public or private and in all levels. From one perspective, it will lead to the advancement of this sector; and from another angle, it creates a proper quality education platform for students to benefit from and increase their chances in employability through the set of transversal skills required for them. In this sense, to adapt to the market needs, students must be taught selected skills (from the long list of life skills) related to the work life. Therefore, in order to define the “Life and Work Skills” the TVET sector will conduct a survey targeted employers in different economic sectors based on three levels: the interpersonal, intrapersonal and practical skills and the results of which will be discussed, verified and approved in a focus group of primary stakeholders in order to define the basic list of Life and work skills needed in the TVET sector.

⁴¹ An ancient city in the land of Shinar in which the building of a tower (Tower of Babel) intended to reach heaven was begun and the confusion of the language of the people took place. Gen. 11:4–9.

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