



Life Skills-Based Education in South Asia

A Regional Overview prepared for:
The South Asia Life Skills-Based Education Forum, 2005



UNITE FOR CHILDREN
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Executive Summary

This overview is a broad assessment and mapping of life skills-based education in South Asia¹, both in schools and for especially vulnerable children and adolescents not in school. It is intended to provide governments, non-governmental organisations (NGO), United Nations (UN) agencies and other actors with information on life skills initiatives in South Asia, in order to support a more systematic and accelerated scaling-up of programming.

The assessment highlights that in South Asia there is a growing dichotomy in life skills programming between general in-school interventions for students and more specific behaviourally-focused interventions for especially vulnerable children and adolescents. Many life skills programmes, particularly those in schools, were unable to answer the question "Life skills for what?" or articulate behavioural outcomes.

In South Asian schools it was found that life skills are being taught using one of the following mechanisms:

- Stand-alone life skills curriculum
- Integrated into an existing curriculum
- Extracurricular programming
- Blended programming

The delivery of life skills to especially vulnerable children and adolescents ranged from non-formal education to structured short-term courses to less structured open classes held in drop-in centres, clubs, etc. This diversity of approaches reflects the lack of a widely accepted easily replicable methodology. The assessment raised concerns that all life skills programming, particularly for especially vulnerable children, should occur in learning environments which are stable and secure, which was often not the case.

The assessment revealed that South Asian countries share many programming challenges. The findings and recommendations were divided into five categories as below.

1. Understanding and Conceptualisation of Life Skills-Based Education

Across South Asia, life skills programming has grown rapidly, contributing to both a diversity of interventions and understanding within countries about what is life skill-based education. One of the many reasons for this is that most stakeholders have never experienced skills-based learning themselves.

In general, there is a reluctance to acknowledge adolescent sexuality and the societal roots of vulnerability, limited delivery capacity, difficulties linking the development of knowledge, attitudes and life skills to behaviour, and a lack of child friendly services.

The assessment clearly points to the need for processes within countries to develop conceptual clarity and build a shared understanding of life skills-based education, ensuring a programming framework with a strong behavioural focus.

¹ For this overview, the region is comprised of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

2. Defining and Measuring Performance

Closely linked to a limited emphasis on articulating and measuring behavioural outcomes, the assessment found that many South Asian life skills programmes were built without an evidence base of the vulnerabilities and risks confronting children and adolescents. This lack of research was explained by both limited resources and technical capacity, and a reluctance to gather data on sensitive topics. Fortunately, a number of countries are now conducting this necessary research.

3. Development and Implementation of Life Skills Programming

A large number of development and implementation challenges were found to be common across many countries in South Asia:

- Most in-school life skills programmes are taught in secondary schools, which many South Asian children never attend. For those who do attend, the programming is usually taught years after the likely exposure of students to risks. The importance of rapidly moving to a seamless life skills-based education approach starting in primary school in all countries was highlighted in the assessment.
- The large number of locally offered in-school extracurricular activities, (usually through NGOs), which circumvent official approval processes, is a tacit acknowledgement of the difficulties of integrating life skills into education systems.
- Similarly, the programme development and implementation of life skills to vulnerable children and adolescents is less complex than in-school programming due to the frequent lack of government involvement. While avoiding the "system" is simpler, the long-term cost is a lack of ownership, sustainability and replication.
- The content of life skills programming was not always relevant or appropriate, and the methods used were not always effective, particularly with different types of learners.
- Many programmes made no provisions to support learners in the use of their new life skills outside of the classroom, with their families or in their communities.
- In general, the selection and training of trainers and the provision of in-service support to trainers were generally inadequate, with insufficient attention paid to building confidence with the content and teaching methods. Monitoring of classroom delivery quality usually did not occur. The use of cascade training and peer education methods were problematic.
- The participation of learners in programming was limited.
- Life skills-based education tended to be dealt with on the margins - or fully excluded - from reform initiatives in the wider education sector.

The assessment clearly highlighted the shortcomings of extra-curricula or project-related life skills-based education in schools that are common across South Asia, and stressed that in-school programming needs to be integrated into the formal curriculum to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. Likewise, programming for those especially vulnerable who are not in school would benefit from increased government interest and oversight.

4. Resistance and Acceptance of Life Skills Programming

Despite South Asia being a region with great social exclusion and inequity challenges, the assessment revealed that these wider societal issues that contribute to the vulnerabilities and risks experienced by South Asian children and adolescents were generally not addressed through life skills-based education programmes. In addition, the need to create school, family and community environments, which supported the use of life skills by learners, was frequently ignored.

Successful processes in developing policy advocacy and social mobilisation plans to build informed and supportive political, policy and institutional environments for life skills-based education were noted in a few countries in the region (e.g. India, Nepal), which could serve as a strong reference point for other countries.

5. Coordination, Networking and Linkages

It was evident in most countries that opportunities for country level coordination and networking were not exploited, and that the leadership potential of many major life skills stakeholders has not been fully developed. The utility of national or sub-national forums on life skills-based education involving government and NGOs was highlighted to promote coordination and collaboration. Closely linked was the expressed need to strengthen the coordination roles of governments, particularly in programming for especially vulnerable children and adolescents who were not in school.

There were a number of important missing linkages in most existing life skills-based education programmes, particularly knowledge of (youth friendly) health and social services. The important role of strengthening informal and formal referral links to services was highlighted in the assessment.

1.1 Background

This regional overview is a broad assessment and mapping of life skills-based education in South Asia,² both in schools and for especially vulnerable children and adolescents who are not in school. It is intended to provide UNAIDS co-sponsor agencies and their government and non-government partners with information on life skills-based education in South Asia, in order to support a more systematic and accelerated scaling-up of programming.

1.2 Methodology and Approach

The development of this regional overview was divided into four discrete phases:

1. A literature review. Distribution and review of a preliminary questionnaire on life skills to UNICEF's South Asia country offices. Development of an interview tool.
2. Site visits to Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India to conduct interviews with UNICEF country offices and partners, as well as with other major stakeholders. Telephone interviews with the UNICEF Country Offices in Afghanistan, Bhutan and the Maldives.
3. Development of eight individual country reports which were shared with the relevant UNICEF country offices for their sharing with major partners and stakeholders for comments and suggestions. Development of a discussion paper which incorporated the country reports, as well as broader findings and recommendations on life skills programming in South Asia.³
4. Presentation of the discussion paper to the *South Asia Life Skills-Based Education Forum*.⁴ The regional overview was developed using the comments received on the discussion paper.

In reading this regional overview paper, three key points should be noted.

Life skills and HIV/AIDS:

Though the entry point for many organisations to life skills-based education is HIV prevention, this overview has made an effort to avoid a singular focus on HIV/AIDS, so as to look at the broader issues of child and adolescent vulnerability, health and wellbeing, along with other societal issues, to which life skills are being applied in South Asia (i.e. drug use, violence, etc...).

Coverage and focus:

The coverage and focus of the overview depended upon the interests of the UNICEF country offices, and stakeholder availability. Given the recent rise of life skills programming, it is probable that some stakeholders were overlooked, particularly in the larger countries.

² For this review, the region is Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

³ The eight country reports have been provided directly to the UNICEF country offices for their use.

⁴ This overview was originally a discussion paper developed for the first *South Asia Life Skills-Based Education Forum*, which was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from September 26th to 28th, 2005. This *Forum* was convened by UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), as a part of the UNAIDS regional work plan.

Intra-regional analysis:

Given that life skills-based education is rooted in national needs and circumstances, this overview did not undertake a comparative assessment of life skills-based education in South Asia.

1.3 Overview of Life Skills and Life Skills-Based Education

The conceptual basis for most of the life skills work undertaken by the United Nations and its partners is the World Health Organisation's (WHO) *Skills for Health*.

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. In particular, life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.⁵

Skills for Health designates ten skills divided into three broad categories: (1) communication and interpersonal skills, (2) decision-making and critical thinking skills, and (3) coping and self-management skills.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Decision-Making and Critical Thinking Skills	Coping and Self-Management Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpersonal Communication Skills• Negotiation/Refusal Skills• Empathy Building• Cooperation and Teamwork• Advocacy Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision-Making/ Problem-Solving Skills• Critical Thinking Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills for Increasing Personal Confidence and Abilities to Assume Control, Take Responsibility, Make a Difference, or Bring About Change• Skills for Managing Feelings• Skills for Managing Stress

The question of the link between life skills-based education and the adoption of positive and protective behaviours is one that appears throughout this overview, and is possibly its single most important issue. The literature indicates that there is little evidence to suggest that teaching general life skills in schools will lead to desired behaviours. Yet the literature on HIV prevention programming, which takes a life skills approach, shows that people can be taught to adopt and sustain desired behaviours if certain criteria are adhered to. Many of these criteria, which are listed below, do not fit easily into school curricula. This should raise questions on how best to introduce life skills into South Asian schools and programmes.

⁵ WHO, *Skills for Life*, (Geneva: 2001, Pp.8).

Ten characteristics of successful HIV prevention education programmes⁶ :

1. Focus narrowly on a small number of specific behavioural goals with all activities directed towards the goals. Generic life skills without a clear focus on sex and a clear message are ineffective.
2. Base programming on theoretical approaches that have been demonstrated to be effective in influencing non-HIV/AIDS health-related risky behaviours.
3. Use clear messages about sexual activity and condom/contraception use, and continually reinforce the messages.
4. Provide basic accurate information about the risks of adolescent sexual activity and about methods of avoiding intercourse or using protection, including detailed information on correct condom use.
5. Deliver activities that address social pressures that influence sexual behaviour. Discuss response “lines” to use when being pressured, social barriers to obtain condoms, and media pressure.
6. Model and practice communication/negotiation/refusal skills. Practice ways to say “no” to sex or insist on condoms.
7. Use a variety of teaching methods, involve participants and encourage the personalisation of information.
8. Incorporate behavioural goals, teaching methods and materials that are appropriate to the young people’s age, sexual experience, and culture.
9. Spend a sufficient period of time to imbed behaviours. Studies indicate that a minimum of 14 consecutive hours are needed. Fewer hours are needed with young people who are volunteers and lots of small group work.
10. Select and train instructors who believe in the programme.

Given the rapid global growth in life skills programming, it is only recently that concerns have been raised. These include:

- A lack of political commitment to acknowledging and confronting issues related to sexuality, gender, and age. An unwillingness to pursue behavioural outcomes which challenge the power structures that restrict young people, particularly girl children and adolescents.
- The apolitical and gender neutral nature of many life skills programmes, as well as a general lack of acknowledgement that the life skills needs for boys and girls are different.⁷
- The lack of evidence for the claims that teaching such generic and diverse skills as empathy and communication will result in specific behavioural outcomes.
- Absence of programming frameworks which clearly define desired behavioural outcomes and the knowledge, attitudes and life skills required to achieve them. A lack of measurement.

6 Adapted from Dr. Douglas Kirby's *HIV Transmission and Prevention in Adolescents: HIV InSite Knowledge Base Chapter*, (Scotts Valley: ETR Associates, 2002, Pp. 3-5).

7 This sets life skills programming apart from the more conscientiously “political” empowerment programming.

- Difficulties with introducing life skills without reforming the wider education system, including:
 - Improving the capacity and motivation of teachers, and the quality of teaching,
 - Introducing a learner-centred pedagogy, not solely reliant on exam-based assessment,
 - Moving life skills from the margins of schooling (i.e. extracurricular) to its centre and creating multiple learning opportunities within schools, and
 - Building *child friendly* schools free from the exclusion practiced in the wider society.
- The limits of introducing life skills-based education in secondary schools when many children either never attend secondary school or reach an age of high vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour in the years immediately before reaching secondary school.
- Inadequacy of many life skills *training-of-trainers* programmes, and the limits of cascade training and peer education to deliver something as complex and unfamiliar as life skills.
- Inability to adapt national life skills-based education curricula to the needs of local learners.

In 2004, UNESCO hosted a meeting of the *Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA*⁸, which discussed the links between life skills, life long learning and sustainable human development, and identified the need for a life skills-based education conceptual framework (including monitoring). It was hoped that such a framework would help to integrate a range of divergent perspectives. As an approach, it was agreed that life skills-based education should be cyclic and sustained (i.e. repeated over time), and employ participatory methods. It was also agreed, as a matter of practicality, that manual skills (i.e. first aid, using a condom, etc...) should not be considered life skills.⁹ However, this separation of psychosocial skills from “practical” skills is neither straightforward nor universally accepted, as the following quote demonstrates.

“...life skills (are) not a domain, or a subject, but cross-cutting applications of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills, which are important in the process of individual development and lifelong learning. They are not just a set of skills, nor are they equal to survival skills, livelihood skills, or vocational skills but part of these skills.”¹⁰

Life skills-based education can be understood as either a part of a general process which develops complete individuals (i.e. public schooling), or something which is defined by the specific issues it is applied to (i.e. HIV prevention, conflict mediation). The debate over whether life skills-based education is a process or something defined by application is now being held in South Asia.

In assessing the delivery of life skills-based education in South Asia, it is clear that many of these global issues and concerns are relevant to this region.

8 UNESCO, *Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA*, (Paris, UNESCO, 2004). A list of the report's conclusions and follow-up can be found in Annex A.

9 The “practicality” argument is that there are so many potential manual skills that it is impractical to list them.

10 Ibid, Pp.5.

2

Life skills in South Asia

2.1 Overview of Life Skills-Based Education in South Asia

Across South Asia, *life skills-based education* is experiencing a rapid growth, involving both the creation of new programmes and the integration of life skills into existing ones. Given the diversity of regional needs and conditions, it is not surprising that this programming has responded with a similar diversity of methods and objectives. It is also not surprising that several challenges are common to most South Asian countries, including a reluctance to acknowledge adolescent sexuality, education sector capacity issues, limited access to *child friendly* services, and difficulties articulating and measuring behavioural outcomes.

In South Asia, life skills programming is either general in nature, helping learners to make better choices, or specific, targeting risk behaviours and situations. This dichotomy, which usually defines the difference between in-school programming and programming for those especially vulnerable who are not in school, has occurred because of a societal reluctance to accept the existence of certain behaviours, particularly sexual behaviours, among school students, and because those who are especially vulnerable need more explicit interventions.

In South Asian schools, life skills are taught as a stand alone curriculum, a component of an existing curriculum (i.e. social studies), an extracurricular activity, or a blend of these. They cover a range of health and non-health issues and are taught in various grades, usually with more complex and sensitive issues being reserved for the higher grades. This is problematic given that many students in South Asia never attend secondary school and that many are vulnerable or are exposed to risks in the years prior to secondary school.

It is also unfortunate that many in-school life skills programmes do not question the societal structures underlying the vulnerabilities and risks they seek to reduce, and have difficulties linking the development of knowledge, attitudes and life skills to the practice of positive or protective behaviours. For example, although life skills are often taught with an objective of preventing HIV, this is frequently done separately from awareness sessions on HIV/AIDS or sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The assumption is that students will independently connect information they learn in one class or module with skills they learn in another, and spontaneously practice a desired behaviour. With regard to societal structures, life skills like negotiation or communication are frequently taught without reference to the inequities and discrimination which impede young people from using these skills outside of the classroom.

In Non-Formal Education (NFE), life skills can be combined with literacy, numeracy, and livelihood training, as in Bangladesh's *Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children Project*. However, in South Asia, most government-supported NFE does not teach life skills. Outside of the education system, life skills are usually taught by non-governmental organisations to especially vulnerable children and adolescents, as with the UNICEF-supported *Child Protection Project* in Pakistan and *Out-of-School Programme* in Nepal. It is noted that such programming is usually delivered on a project basis and with limited government involvement, raising questions of long-term sustainability

The challenge of programming for defined behavioural outcomes is related to the perceived difficulties with articulating and measuring these behaviours. Fortunately, more countries are studying adolescent behaviour. Recently, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan have completed such studies. India and Nepal are planning to repeat earlier surveys.

A final general observation is on the diversity of processes used to develop in-school programmes in South Asia. Sri Lanka's *Life Competencies Programme* is a testament to high-level cooperation between the ministries of education and health. Nepal's new life skills module is a result of coordination between the agencies that develop curriculum and train teachers, and the leadership of life skills "champions" within the Ministry of Education and Sports. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development worked to convince the Education Secretaries of 28 states and seven union territories to agree to a national *Adolescent Education Programme* with a common HIV/AIDS curriculum.

2.2 Major Findings

The major findings of this regional overview have been organised in the following manner:

- Understanding and conceptualisation of life skills-based education,
- Defining and measuring performance,
- Development and implementation of life skills programming,
- Resistance and acceptance of life skills programming, and
- Coordination, networking and linkages.

2.2.1 Understanding and conceptualisation of life skills-based education

Challenges to the understanding and conceptualisation of life skills-based education:

1. Clarity on the use of the term "life skills-based education"
2. Dichotomy between in-school programming and programming for especially vulnerable children and adolescents
3. Linking life skills to behaviour

Clarity and shared understanding on life skills-based education...

The regional overview has documented the rapid growth of life skills-based education across South Asia, and a situation where programming is often more advanced than stakeholder understanding. This suggests an opportunity to build clarity and a shared understanding.

While most South Asian stakeholders accept the definition and taxonomy of life skills proposed by WHO's *Skills for Life*¹¹, there is less agreement on "life skills-based education"¹². This is due to the fact that while the behavioural science behind life skills is strong, the pedagogical theory on how these skills are learned and used is less developed. This can be observed in the

11 While the delineation of the ten life skills in the WHO's *Skills for Life* is generally accepted, there are some concerns that the list is too formulaic and complex, and encourages rote teaching. Others advocated for the inclusion of additional skills, including democratic participation, accessing health services, and managing money.

12 Given the large variations in the use of the term *life skills-based education*, this regional overview has chosen to use lower case letters and to avoid the use of the acronym "LSBE".

many stakeholders who are unable to describe skills-based learning or explain the difference between building awareness and developing skills, believe that life skills-based education is primarily about building awareness of life skills (whether through rote learning or participatory methods), and cannot explain how the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills can lead to positive and protective behaviours.

Given that life skills-based education is new and that most stakeholders have never experienced skills-based learning themselves, this lack of understanding is not surprising. It is also not surprising that the most enthusiastic supporters of life skills are those who have undergone personal life skills development, as a part of their life skills training-of-trainers courses. This indicates the importance of both internalising life skills before teaching them, and allowing for enough time in such training-of-trainer programmes for internalisation.

As discussed, the relationships between life skills and behaviour and between life skills and the structural issues which underpin the inequities and discrimination experienced by many children and adolescents in South Asia remain unclear. There are questions as to whether life skills-based education should teach values, and if yes, whose values. There are also questions as to how central HIV/AIDS should be in life skills programming.¹³

Finally, there are issues around the terms *out-of-school* and *non-formal education (NFE)*. Over time, *out-of-school* has come to include an assumption of vulnerability. While there is truth to this, in countries where many school age children are not students and most never attend secondary school, school attendance as a measure of vulnerability is meaningless. Also, given the fact that all students spend some time out of school, and that many attend irregularly or infrequently, the term is inexact. The meaning of *NFE* has come to include everything from national long-term programmes, which lead to formal school reintegration, to local short-term interventions with specific goals (i.e. HIV prevention).¹⁴

Life skills programming is heading in two different directions...

In South Asia, life skills-based education is heading in two directions: general in-school interventions and more behaviourally-focused programming for those especially vulnerable. As discussed, this dichotomy has occurred because the especially vulnerable need more explicit interventions and because, despite evidence of risk among some adolescent students, there is significant resistance to programming for this reality.¹⁵

The dichotomy should not be viewed as a problem if it is acknowledged, along with the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. For example, the literature provides no proof that teaching life skills, in schools, with learning divided among short duration classes offered on a weekly or monthly basis over an academic year and covering many subjects, helps students to live better lives. In fact, studies of HIV prevention programmes (See *Ten characteristics of successful HIV prevention education programmes* on in section 1.3) appear to indicate that the structure of in-school programmes militates against achieving behavioural outcomes. At the same time, the empirical evidence suggests that schools are the most sustainable site for life skills-based education because of stable funding, existing organisational structures, secure learning environments, trained teachers, and access to large numbers of students. In this regard, in-school programmes could become more effective by copying the targeted methods

¹³ While life skills can be applied to many issues, HIV/AIDS should, given regional prevalence, remain a focus. India's *Adolescent Education Programme* is an example of an intervention which enforces a minimum HIV/AIDS content but allows states and union territories to include other priorities, of local importance.

¹⁴ When possible, this overview will use the words *especially vulnerable children and adolescents* to differentiate this population from those who attend school regularly. The overview will also use "NFE" to describe only those education interventions which offer multi-year programming, covering a range of subjects.

¹⁵ Children and adolescents are often judged by their social status. This can mean that "hard" sexual health messages are permitted for those especially vulnerable, in part because they are judged to be "knowledgeable". Conversely, it is difficult to get approval for similar in-school programming, despite evidence of risk behaviour.

used with vulnerable children and adolescents, while programmes for the vulnerable could benefit from emulating school conditions.

Linking life skills to behaviour...

Many life skills programmes in South Asia, particularly those in schools, are unable to answer the question: “*Life skills for what?*”, or articulate behavioural outcomes. This reluctance to programme for behaviour may come from a misplaced sense of propriety, cultural or political resistance, a realistic assessment that existing programming is unlikely to produce behavioural change, or a lack of measurement capacity.

One result of this unwillingness to focus on behaviours is the programmatic “divorce” of knowledge from life skills and life skills from behaviour. In practice, this might mean, that information on smoking (i.e. health consequences, addictions, etc...) is provided in a different subject or at a different time than training on the relevant life skills (i.e. decision making, refusal, etc...), and little effort is made to link the two, in pursuit of a desired behaviour (i.e. not smoking). This undermines programming effectiveness and impact.

2.2.2 Defining and measuring performance

Challenges to the definition and measurement of performance:

1. Identifying priority vulnerabilities and risks and articulating behavioural outcomes
2. Measuring behaviour

Identifying priority vulnerabilities and risks and articulating behavioural outcomes...

The development of effective life skills programming requires an evidence-base which identifies vulnerabilities and risks, and sets priorities. UNICEF India used a *Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Behaviour (KAPB)* study from 2001 in the design of its *Adolescent Education Programme*, and will repeat the study this year. Recently, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan have completed adolescent behaviour studies. UNICEF Nepal is currently planning a baseline study for its life skills work. In general, there is a need to develop and use evidence bases, and to better define (i.e. segment) target groups by levels and types of vulnerability. This should include the many children and adolescents in South Asia who are not in school but do not belong to a specific vulnerable sub-population.¹⁶

Many stakeholders have decided to not articulate or measure behaviour due to a perceived lack of technical expertise. This was particularly evident with in-school programming, perhaps because of the general nature of the life skills taught and the difficulties attributing programme activities to a particular behavioural outcome. While programming for vulnerable children and adolescents is no more likely to be evidence-based or behaviourally-focused, it appears easier to articulate and measure behaviour as the programming is more focused and it is more acceptable to acknowledge the existence of risk behaviours in this population.

¹⁶ Several stakeholders noted that there is a need for more research on in-school adolescents, in part because of the persistent belief that they do not engage in risk behaviours.

For those who are in school in South Asia, the reality is that their exposure to risks like unprotected sex is probably low. For those few students who are exposed, it is unlikely that schools will acknowledge otherwise anytime soon. In the short-term, in-school programming may choose to overcome the “divorce” of skills from behaviour by focusing on the “determinants” of behaviour which support the specific positive and protective behaviours.¹⁷

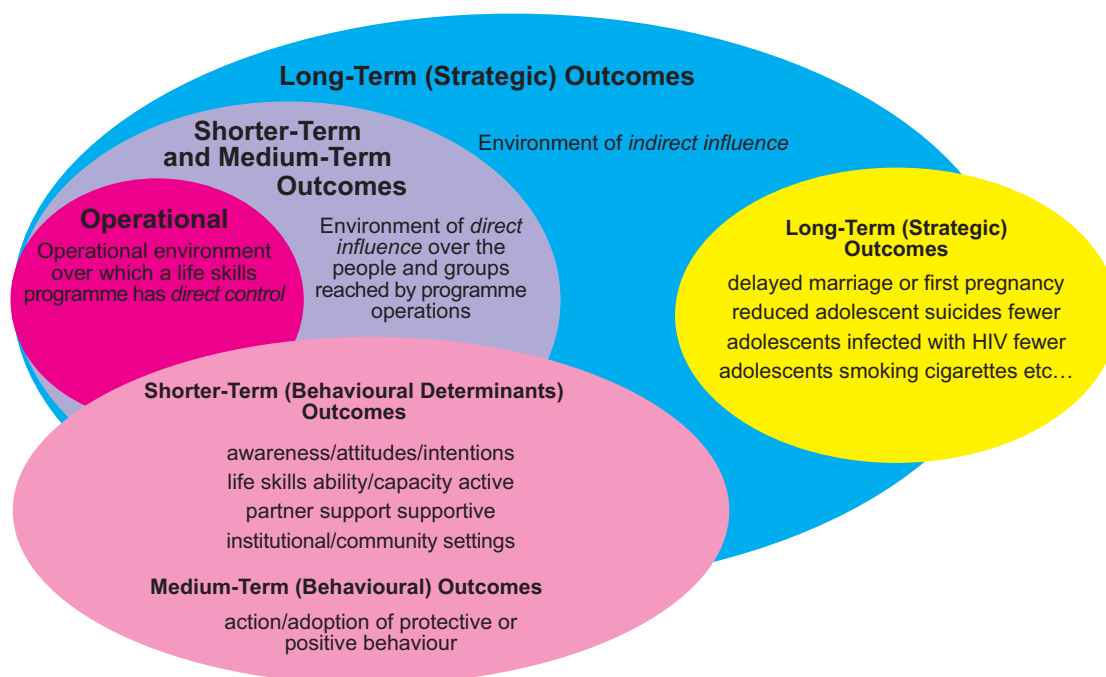
Measuring behaviour...

Having chosen to judge life skills programming success by the “up-take” of protective and positive behaviours, there is a need to articulate and measure behavioural outcomes. One strategy is to build capacity in behaviourally-focused programming methods like *Results-Based Management (RBM)* or *Mapping of Adolescent Programming and Measurement (MAPM)*, which rely upon a chain of cause-effect relationships known as a *results chain* (See below). MAPM emphasises a distinction between behaviours and their determinants. For example, if a programme’s goal is better child spacing and the activities/outputs are information materials, orientation sessions, and health services; the activities/outputs must first help the target population achieve certain behavioural determinants:

- Awareness (i.e. knowledge of family planning: risks and benefits, methods, etc...),
- Attitudes (i.e. belief that child spacing and family planning are positive activities),
- Skills (i.e. using birth control, intra-family communication, seeking medical help), and
- Supportive institutions, communities and broader environment (i.e. medical facilities/staff, religious leaders and policy frameworks).

If these behavioural determinants are achieved, it is more likely that the target population will practice the desired behaviour (i.e. correctly and consistently use family planning methods), and that the programme will ultimately achieve its goal of better child spacing.

Results Chain for Life Skills Programming



¹⁷ Behavioural determinants support or impede the adoption of positive or protective behaviours (e.g. hand washing). Supportive determinants should include awareness, attitudes/intentions, life skills, active stakeholder/partner involvement, and a supportive political, policy and community environment.

A measurement challenge for life skills programming is attribution: the causal link between a programme activity and a behavioural outcome, given all the influencing factors beyond a programme's control. Fortunately, the measurement of behavioural determinants allows a programme to more confidently assess its contribution to a particular behavioural outcome.

While measuring behaviour is viewed as complex, it can be done if there is a commitment to building technical capacity and advocating for the use of existing statistical tools to measure child and adolescent behaviours and behavioural determinants (i.e. Behavioural Surveillance Surveys (BSS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)). The ability to define and use indicators, particularly for in-school programmes, needs to be developed.

While initial efforts to measure behaviour and behavioural determinants are likely to be a learning experience for all involved, the minimum results would be an increase in technical capacity and confidence, the creation of more data than currently exists, and a basis for a more informed dialogue on the effectiveness and quality of life skills-based education.

2.2.3 Development and implementation of life skills programming

Challenges to the implementation of life skills programming:

1. Life skills-based education in the context of education sector reform
2. Creating implementation processes for in-school and especially vulnerable children and adolescent programming
3. Designing life skills programming
4. Building life skills programming capacity and confidence
5. Programme sustainability
6. Participation of children and adolescents in life skills-based education

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

When developing in-school life skills-based education, it is important to place it in the context of wider education sector reforms. Ultimately, to be effective, life skills must be taught in schools that are inclusive, *child-friendly*¹⁸, adequately resourced and provisioned, staffed by trained and motivated teachers, and which utilise participatory and experiential methods (including continuous assessment). It should begin in the junior grades and continue through the higher ones, applying life skills, over time, to more sensitive and complex issues.

The value of a seamless life skills-based education, beginning in primary school, is a lesson learnt by those who first began their programming in secondary schools. Currently, in South Asia, only Afghanistan and Nepal are offering life skills in the primary grades, though Sri Lanka is planning to introduce their *Life Competency Programme* to lower grades, India is discussing how to begin life skills in primary schools and eventually link it to their secondary level *Adolescent Education Programme*, and Bhutan will soon be introducing a UNFPA-supported in-school life skills programme, with a SRH focus.

18 While UNICEF's *child friendly* schools focus is primary education, the concept can be extended to upper grades.

It is also important to note that many children and adolescents who are not in school in South Asia are neither highly vulnerable nor exposed to high levels of risk. For these children and adolescents, the best life skills strategy is to get them into school. An inclusive affordable and effective education can “inoculate” students against a host of vulnerabilities and risks, as well as provide them with access to in-school life skills programming.

For life skills stakeholders, it is important to continue strengthening the entire education sector and expanding school enrollment, while pursuing the shorter-term goals of training life skills teachers (even where curricula do not exist) and supporting life skills extracurricular activities¹⁹. It also means continuing efforts to incorporate life skills into primary level *child-friendly* and *Education for All (EFA)* initiatives, as UNICEF is doing in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. An additional challenge is the need to incorporate “hard” behavioural topics into life skills programming in the years before adolescents are exposed to risks (i.e. pre-puberty), and before most students end their formal education. In South Asia, this usually means the upper primary grades.²⁰

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

The integration of life skills-based education into entire school systems is complex, involving many agencies and multiple stages and levels of approval. It is also often political, particularly if the curricula content challenges cultural beliefs, or there are jurisdictional issues, as in federal states like India and Pakistan. These difficulties are tacitly acknowledged in the large number of “in-school extracurricular” life skills activities offered on a school-by-school or local basis. While this approach can avoid complicated formal approval processes, the results have frequently been an explosion of programming with no coordination, quality control or sustainability, and limited education sector “buy-in”.²¹

Only four countries in South Asia: Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, are formally introducing life skills into schools, on a nationwide basis. All have had to engage in complex advocacy processes to build awareness and support. In Nepal, the curriculum development and teacher training agencies worked together to build support within their ministry.²² In India, it was the successful experiences of states, already doing life skills work, which convinced the Ministry of Human Resource Development to launch a nation-wide *Adolescent Education Programme*, with a minimum HIV/AIDS component and mandatory life skills approach. The challenge for these countries is to now build quality into their programmes through incremental improvements over time. Given that they have developed sustainable structures within the education sector, this should be achievable.

In advance of education sector reform, managing life skills programming can be a challenge. It may create friction with teachers and students, who are already under pressure from a packed curriculum and an exam-based assessment system. In response, some countries have made life skills an examinable subject in order to signal its importance. Unfortunately, this may result in life skills becoming just another knowledge-based subject that students are required to

19 Teachers can be trained quicker than systems can be reformed. A trained life skills teacher can still play a positive role through extracurricular life skills activities, particularly when education systems are weak.

20 There is a growing recognition among some regional stakeholders of the need for *sex education* prior to secondary school, which may or may not use a life skills approach. Recently the Indian Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss said that “*There is a growing realization that the health needs of adolescents, particularly their reproductive and sexual health needs, require to be address in the Upper Primary stage so that they can cope with concerns related to the process of growing up.*” (From the August-September 2005 e-edition of the newsletter, *Asian Forum on Parliamentarians on Population and Development*).

21 A matrix of formal in-school life skills-based education in the eight regional countries is attached as Annex B.

22 In the case of Nepal, it was noted that a factor in developing support for life skills-based education within the Ministry of Education was the role played by a UNICEF National Officer. Given the cultural and languages issues, it is unlikely that an international staff person or consultant could have achieved the same results.

memorise. In addition, life skills cannot be effectively assessed by written exams. There are also education sector “cultural” issues which can make teaching life skills unattractive. Sri Lankan *Life Competencies Programme* teachers complain that their colleagues often disparage their classes as not “serious” education.

Several countries are discussing the extension of life skills-based education to their large private and religious school systems.

The delivery of life skills to vulnerable children and adolescents appears easier when compared to the complexity of in-school programming. This is due in large part to a degree of government non-involvement or disinterest with this population. The results have been an accountability and coordination vacuum, where numerous projects of varying quality, are offered by a host of bodies with little oversight. While avoiding the “system” is simpler, the long-term results have been a lack of state ownership, lost opportunities for improvement and expansion, and wasted resources on non-sustainable interventions. The main challenge for programming for especially vulnerable children and adolescents not in school is building the needed government and societal interest and support. There are also serious questions, given the immediacy of the needs of those especially vulnerable, of whether life skills are a priority and if so, what should the balance be between offering (immediate) information and services and (medium to long-term) life skills programming.

Developing life skills programming...

In developing life skills programmes in South Asia, two factors need to be considered: (1) delivery mechanisms and (2) content.

- (1) There are several life skills **delivery mechanisms** currently being used in South Asia. Those for in-school programmes include:

Stand-alone life skills curriculum: e.g. Sri Lanka’s *Life Competencies Programme*, Afghanistan’s *Life Skills Curriculum*, and the Maldives’ pilot *Life Skills Project*.

Integrated into an existing curriculum: e.g. Nepal’s health curriculum.

Extracurricular activities: e.g. Pakistan’s *Empowerment of Adolescents Project* and the Bhutan Scout’s *Life Skills Course*.

Blended programming: (i.e. integrated curriculum and extracurricular activities) e.g. India’s *Adolescent Education Programme*.

While the literature supports the idea that life skills should be integrated into all curricula, and not delivered as its own subject or module, this is not realistic for most South Asian school systems. The exception is Sri Lanka, which is studying how to integrate life skills across the entire secondary curriculum. In the interim, the development of stand-alone, integrated, or extracurricular programming are practical initial steps for most countries in the region.

As the impetus for many in-school programmes is HIV/AIDS, there has been a tendency to place life skills in health or science classes. While this serves the interest of health, it may limit the ability of life skills to be effectively utilised for non-health issues such as caste or ethnic discrimination, gender-based violence, or communal conflict.

Life skill delivery mechanisms for those especially vulnerable can range from non-formal education programmes to structured short-term courses, to less structured open classes held in drop-in centres, clinics, clubs, or even public spaces. Given that successful behavioural initiatives require conditions such as a focus on issues, clear messages, and opportunities to practice/model the learned skills, a learning environment which is not stable, and a programme which cannot be delivered on a regular cyclical basis, or does not have regular attendees may be limited in its effectiveness. Other challenges include:

- Teaching life skills to the many vulnerable children and adolescents who are illiterate or semi-illiterate, including the development of appropriate learning materials;
- Development of programming for the many different types of vulnerable learners (i.e. female/male, urban/rural, etc...), with different types and levels of vulnerability and risk; and
- Development of life skills approaches for the many government-supported or -sanctioned non-formal education programmes with national coverage of vulnerable populations.

The range of programming for especially vulnerable children and adolescents is a reflection of the lack of a widely accepted or easily replicable methodology, and that vulnerabilities and risks are highly localised. It is also a reflection of a difficult programming environment with challenging mobile clients, fluid operating conditions, measurement challenges, and higher expenses when compared to the cost efficiencies of public education. Beyond general programming principles, there are no “magic” models for this population.

It was observed that most South Asian life skills programmes, both in and out of school, is reliant on classrooms and workshops. Groups like Butterflies in India and the Young Star Club in Nepal are moving beyond this traditional approach by supporting community-based learning, through meaningful participation and useful work on committees and cooperatives, leading workshops and decision making responsibilities. If life skills-based education is to be about experiential learning, participants need to learn and practice in the wider world.

- (2) The question of what the **content** of life skills-based education should be is contentious: divided by debates on definition and behavioural focus, and viewed, by many, as a “flash point” for societal struggles on issues such as values, gender and sexuality. In South Asia, the content of life skills programming raises several questions, which are listed below.

Building life skills programming capacity and confidence...

Life skills programming is only as good as the capacity and confidence of those who deliver it. As such, there is no single intervention, which can so dramatically improve life skills-based education, as investing in these people. Bearing this in mind, stakeholders should review how teachers and peer educators are developed in South Asia, with reference to the:

1. Limited experience with experiential, participatory, and activity-based learning, and lack of confidence among teachers (and other adult instructors) to lead sessions on sensitive topics;
2. Low quality and short duration of the life skills training provided to teachers (and other adult instructors), and the lack of on-going in-service support; and
3. High expectations placed upon peer educators to deliver complex life skills modules with low quality and short duration training, and limited supervision and support.

Life Skills-Based Education in South Asia – A Question of Content

How have countries prioritised their life skills issues? What was the decision making process? What evidence was used?

Are the WHO's ten core life skills the only life skills? Is this list too prescriptive?

Do life skills messages accurately and unambiguously address the vulnerabilities and risks faced by children and adolescents, including those who are in school? Do they relate to realistic situations and highlight the protective and positive behaviours required? Are there opportunities to practice the new skills? Are “hard” topics (i.e. sexual health) taught prior to the age of possible exposure to risks?

Do life skills programmes differentiate between types of learners (i.e. boys/girls, rural/urban)?

Why is there so much science and so little sex in life skills programmes for HIV prevention?

Why do South Asian HIV/AIDS life skills programmes often deliver a negative view of sex and sexuality (i.e. immoral, dangerous, etc...)? Why is the protective value of marriage promoted when most South Asian women living with HIV/AIDS are infected by their husbands?

If life skills-based education is about teaching values, whose values should be taught?

Where is the discussion in life skills programming of the societal exclusion and marginalisation occurring today in South Asian countries? Why is gender sometimes ignored as a life skills issue?

How can life skills and livelihoods skills be promoted? If life skills can reduce risks, can livelihoods skills reduce vulnerability? How to promote a life skills approach to livelihoods training?

(1) Life skills-based education with its experiential, participatory and activity-based methods imposes a burden on teachers and instructors who have never experienced such ways of learning themselves. Without adequate training, which allows for the personalisation and internalisation of skills, the tendency is to revert to familiar didactic teaching approaches.

In building teaching capacity, training courses must not only impart content and methods, they must also build confidence, by assisting trainees to become more comfortable with life skills and better able to build relationships of trust with their students. It was pointed out that life skill-based education is a “subversive” activity in that it transfers power from the teacher to the student. Effective life skills teachers are those who can internalise the skills and are not afraid to lead classes of independent and critical thinkers. During the assessment, this was seen clearly with Sri Lankan *Life Competencies Programme* teachers who felt that their training had made them both better people and teachers, who now enjoyed a more productive relationship with their students.

More thought is also required on the selection of teachers and instructors for life skills training. Just as some people make better math or language teachers, so too, some people make life skills teachers. To this end, effort is needed to identify the personal competencies of life skills teachers and select candidates based upon their personal suitability.

(2) Life skills-based education succeeds or fails based upon teaching quality. Given this, there is an urgent need to provide quality training and ongoing support to life skills teachers and instructors. Unfortunately, in South Asia, training in life skills instruction is often of low quality and short duration; not allowing for the practice or internalisation of the skills. Frequently, it avoids or inadequately covers sensitive issues, and is taught by master trainers who have little experience in skills-based learning themselves. Following this generally inadequate training, teachers are placed in classrooms with no in-service support or supervision to monitor and improve the quality of classroom delivery.

There is a need for life skills programmes to reconsider the limits of *Cascade Training* to develop teachers, instructors and peer educators. While it is cost effective, it is not necessarily appropriate for something as complex and novel as life skills. However, as resource constraints will probably mean a continued reliance on *Cascade Training*, more effort is required to develop and support trainers. This could include the development of life skills courses or modules in pre-service teacher training, improved selection of life skills training candidates, development of district-level in-service support systems staffed by “life skills teaching coaches”, improved in-service training, teacher self-assessment tools, teacher involvement in programme design, and the development of support and referral networks.

The final point on building teaching capacity is that it should start immediately, even if no curriculum exists. Teachers can be trained quicker than systems can be changed, and a life skills teacher can still play a role in extracurricular activities and one-on-one interactions.

(3) While peer educators form an important part of South Asian adolescent programming, particularly where schooling is weak or inaccessible, “under-supervised” adolescent volunteers with limited training are not a substitute for trained adult professionals. Given this, stakeholders should review their use of peer educators from the perspectives of programming expectations, training quality, the use of incentives, and the need for trained adult mentors who can provide in-service support and supervision.

In South Asia, some of the observed challenges with the use of peer educators include:

- Replication of the hierarchical and gender relations found in the wider society.
- Return to familiar pedagogical methods – didactic and information-based.
- Requirement to sometimes deliver programming in environments which are not conducive to life skills learning (i.e. public markets or bus parks).
- Frequently unsupervised or under-supervised.
- High expectations despite limited training of varying quality, low resource levels, no incentives or recognition, and limited support.

Peer educators play an important role in programme delivery, as well as promote child participation, extend programming reach, and create links to the wider community. However, this should be tempered with a realistic assessment of what they can achieve and a better understanding of their needs. One initiative in Maharashtra, India has linked peer educators to village HIV/AIDS plans, effectively committing communities to support them.

Programme sustainability...

Sustainability is primarily an issue for life skills programming for vulnerable children and adolescents not in school. As discussed, project-based delivery to this population with its limited coverage and profile, lack of an easily replicable methodology, and an uncertain government and societal commitment, have all undermined the possibility of sustainability. This

is an important issue for those countries where development partners are supporting the delivery of life skill programming to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children and adolescents, with no certainty that governments or civil society will eventually assume their responsibilities as duty bearers to this population. Advocacy efforts are required to ensure that responsible ministries accept their duty to protect and care for the most vulnerable.

While less urgent, the sustainability of life skills in the education sector is related to the movement of life skills from extracurricular activities to an integral part of the curriculum.

Participation of children and adolescents in life skills-based education...

The role of children and adolescents in life skills-based education is mainly confined to peer education. Surprisingly few South Asian programmes, particularly those in the education sector, involved children and adolescents in identifying vulnerabilities and risks, or designing interventions, and those that did often restricted their participatory activities to limited focus group discussions. Few programmes involved children and adolescents in decision making, monitoring or governance roles. This threatens programme effectiveness and legitimacy.

2.2.4 Building acceptance of life skills programming

Challenges to the acceptance of life skills programming:

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

Life skills programming can play a role in “nudging” societies towards social inclusion and equality, creating a more beneficial teacher-student relationship, and promoting a public discourse on issues previously considered taboo. For this reason, deliberate efforts are required to build awareness and acceptance through advocacy and social mobilisation.

Creating a supportive environment for the practice of life skills...

Children and adolescents are more likely to make good decisions if they can experience control over their lives; and gain a sense of self-respect and recognition from others, including teachers and parents. However, a lack of future prospects, little family support, low community status, and limited opportunities to play a role in community decisions, all serve to undermine life skills programming. To increase the likelihood of success, programmes need to create opportunities to practice life skills outside the classroom; question youth stereotypes; and, build support for the right to self-determination. Simply put, unless schools, families and communities are prepared to allow children and adolescents to play an active role in the decisions affecting them, life skills will remain confined to the classroom.

Few South Asian life skills programmes, even those covering HIV/AIDS, address gender issues such as female economic marginalisation, gender-based violence or male sexual behaviour, and other societal issues. This difficulty is seen in the tendency of programmes to teach individual-level solutions rather than engage in societal analysis (i.e. girls are taught to avoid rape, but boys are not asked to question why some males rape).

“...seeking to change female behaviour without taking into account its relationship to male behaviour limits the viability of such strategies.”²³

If life skills programming is to empower children and adolescents, particularly female ones, it must develop their understanding of how societal factors, such as patriarchy, affect them, and develop the individual and collective strategies necessary to overcome the challenges. India's *Adolescent Education Programme* places a major emphasis on the role of gender in HIV/AIDS. Life skills programmes must also promote learning environments free from sexual harassment and discrimination based upon gender, caste, ethnicity or faith.

Advocating and orienting politicians, policy makers, and societal leaders...

Societal change requires leadership. Successful life skills programmes invest in advocacy with political, policy and societal elites to engage their leadership. In Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and India, ministers played a major role in supporting programming. In Nepal, mid-level education officials “championed” life skills throughout their ministry to build internal support.

Advocacy efforts must build the awareness and commitment of decision makers to deal with the vulnerabilities and risks faced by children and adolescents, as well as complacency and denial in the wider society. This is often a difficult task, given that many of the challenges are recent phenomena, frequently misunderstood, and often involve sensitive topics such as sexuality or gender. In creating commitment to life skills programming, advocacy activities must build the knowledge and confidence required to question cultural “values” which are inconsistent with the dictates of public health and human rights, or are irrelevant or harmful.

Advocacy efforts must also support decision makers to lead a more general discourse on the responsibility of societies and governments to protect and ensure the well-being and development of especially vulnerable children and adolescents.

Building support in communities and schools for life skills programming...

As with advocacy activities for decision makers, there is a need to build support for life skills-based education among communities, schools, and families, through mobilisation activities. There is also a need to confront complacency and denial about the risks facing children and adolescents, to build awareness of the benefits of life skills, and to reject the notion that it is a “foreign” concept intent on undermining traditional values.

While it must be acknowledged that families are the true and best providers of life skills, it must be accepted that in a rapidly changing world, there are risks (i.e. drugs, HIV/AIDS, trafficking, etc...) which many parents may be unaware of or unprepared for. It also needs to be accepted that most families, in most cultures, can be found wanting when it comes to providing information to their children on topics considered sensitive or taboo.

Orienting parents, local officials (i.e. school principals, district education officers, etc...), religious leaders, and teachers (not teaching life skills) is something that many interventions identified as important for the creation of the necessary programming “space”. This includes preparing people for the “subversive” nature of life skills-based education. India's *Adolescent Education Programme* provides programme orientations to parents and communities.²⁴ Many stakeholders spoke of the value of teaching life skills to parents.

²³ UNAIDS, *Impact of Sexual and HIV Health Education*, (UNAIDS: Geneva, 1997).

²⁴ The decision to use the generic title *Adolescent Education Programme* in India was a conscious decision to ensure that the programme title did not become a “rallying point” for social conservatives.

While there is a need to be sensitive to community values, there is also a need to recognise that these values are not immutable. Sensitivity to values and traditions should not be an excuse for inaction. Stakeholders must take a leadership role in questioning those practices which make children and adolescents more vulnerable and more at risk.

2.2.5 Coordination, networking and linkages

Challenges to the coordination and networking of life skills programming:

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

Programme coordination...

The level of inter-programme coordination in life skills-based education, at a national level, varies greatly across South Asia. India and Sri Lanka are good examples of inter-ministerial collaboration, and Nepal is a good example of intra-ministerial coordination. Conversely, there are also ministries of education and health that do not appear to know what the other is doing, or where different agencies of the same ministry are working on life skills in isolation from each other. Like governments, international organisations and non-governmental organisations are frequently uncertain about what others are doing. Among United Nations agencies, there is a need for UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and UNESCO to keep abreast of each other's life skills work, if duplication is to be avoided and collaborative opportunities exploited. A recent positive initiative is the work of UNICEF and UNFPA in India to integrate their work into the new *Adolescent Education Programme*.

Wherever life skills programming is delivered as an in-school extracurricular activity or to vulnerable children and adolescents by civil society groups, there is a risk of duplication, no coordination, limited coverage and quality, and loss of oversight. South Asian governments, with large numbers of small stakeholders delivering life skills programmes outside their direct control must be sensitive to these issues. It is particularly important that all life skills programming for HIV/AIDS be coordinated with national HIV/AIDS programmes.

Leadership and networking on life skill-based education...

Major life skills stakeholders need to promote and support an ambitious standard for life skills-based education: one that focuses on the experiential nature of the learning and its desired behavioural outcomes, as well as the goal of more inclusive and equitable societies.

Given the growing number of stakeholders, varying levels of capacity, and the increasing demands for life skills programming, there is an opportunity for larger and better resourced stakeholders to play a leadership role in promoting life skills through policy and advocacy work, pilot projects, capacity building, monitoring tools development, and the creation of life skills networks. These leading stakeholders could work to ensure that life skills-based education is included in policy documents such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), education sector plans, and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), and programme documents such as National AIDS Control Programmes (NACP) and education Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp). They could assist in establishing standards, supporting orientation and training, funding pilot initiatives, and promoting government involvement and oversight, particularly for those especially vulnerable.

Leading stakeholders should also work to bring stakeholders together in networks which could promote life skills-based education, encourage collaboration, and support the sharing of information and best practices. These networks should seek to increase collaboration within and between governments and non-governmental organisations. A possible first activity for such a national network would be the mapping of life skills activities.

The assessment noted that stakeholders have not always accepted leadership or advocacy roles in life skills for HIV prevention when opportunities arose. Unfortunately, there are still stakeholder staff who deny that HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation or drug abuse are issues in their countries, or that life skills are a priority intervention. It would appear that major stakeholders should commit to the ongoing development of their staff in this area.

Given the level of misunderstanding about life skills-based education, it is not surprising that donors and governments have unrealistic expectations of what life skills programming can achieve. This is particularly the case for in-school programming. Major stakeholders, like UNICEF, while promoting a high standard, should seek to educate others on what can reasonably be accomplished, given the novelty and complexity of life skills programming, resource and capacity limitations, the absence of a supportive environment, and a lack of needed services, as well as the challenges of working with vulnerable populations that are not in school. Efforts are needed to resist the tendency of governments and donors to see life skills as an “add-on” to existing work.

Countries such as Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Nepal now have life skills committees or working groups of some type to exchange information, coordinate activities, or establish future standards and programming. Though these bodies have had varying degrees of success in establishing and sustaining themselves, their efforts should be continued, expanded and replicated, and include the promotion of nodal ministries and nodal ministry personnel for life skills programming.

Linking children and adolescents to services...

As noted, there is a lack of services for children and adolescents in South Asia, whether in health and social services, vocational training, community meeting spaces, or recreational activities. Life skills programming, which promotes protective and positive behaviours, will have difficulty succeeding if learners cannot access such services. Life skills programming for HIV prevention, which does not link to condoms, voluntary counseling and testing, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) treatment will not succeed. Programmes in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan are all beginning to look at this challenge, and develop services which will compliment existing life skills programming.

Recommendations

3.1 Understanding and conceptualisation of life skills-based education

Clarity and shared understanding on life skills-based education...

◆ Through the mechanisms of networks and forums, develop a process to build a shared understanding of life skills-based education in South Asia, with the eventual aim of developing a broad programming framework which can guide development, implementation and assessment. This shared understanding should be built around the following issues:

- Definition of core life skills: WHO's Skill for Life ten core life skills and others,
- Relationship between knowledge, attitudes and life skills, and the development of desired behavioural determinants and behaviours, including measurement capacity,
- Understanding of the dichotomy between in-school life skills-based education and programming for especially vulnerable children and adolescents who are not in school,
- In-school life skills programming in the context of education sector reform,
- Promotion of appropriate teaching methods and standards for training and support,
- Child and adolescent learner participation,
- Linkage between life skills and wider societal issues, such as poverty and discrimination,
- Creation of supportive school, family and community environments where learners can practice and use their life skills, and
- Promotion of interest and responsibility among duty bearers for life skills development, especially among vulnerable children and adolescents.

3.2 Defining and measuring performance

Identifying priority vulnerabilities and risks and articulating behavioural outcomes...

◆ Promote the development of national evidence bases on the vulnerabilities and risks confronting children and adolescents, including the modification of existing statistical tools (i.e. Behavioural Surveillance Surveys, Demographic Health Surveys, etc...). Promote the incorporation of findings into programme design, articulating both priority life skills and the desired behavioural outcomes.

Specifically, evidence bases should seek to validate the widely held assumption that students do not engage in risk behaviours and are not exposed to risk situations. In-school life skills programming should be developed based upon the findings of such research.

Measuring behaviour...

◆ Life skills programming documents, including monitoring and evaluation plans, should articulate the relationship between knowledge, attitudes and life skills in the development of behavioural determinants and behaviours. This includes the articulation of measurable behavioural outcomes and the identification of appropriate indicators of progress. HIV prevention

programming must specifically address sexual and gender-prescribed behaviour. Performance measurement capacity must be built.

There is a need to further develop measurable behavioural and behavioural determinant outcomes for general in-school life skills programming, where the ultimate goal may be to develop "well-rounded individuals" or "healthy, responsible and productive young citizens".

3.3 Development and implementation of life skills programming

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

- ◆ Life skills stakeholders, working in the education sector, should continue with their long-term goal of strengthening the wider sector, while pursuing the shorter-term goals of training competent life skills teachers (even if life skills curricula do not exist) and supporting extracurricular life skills activities.

Life skills stakeholders should seek to reach low vulnerability children and adolescents who are not in school by increasing school accessibility and enrollment.

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

- ◆ All life skills programming (current or planned) should consider the seamless delivery of life skills, extending from primary to senior secondary school, incorporating issues of increasing complexity and sensitivity, over time, in an age-appropriate manner.

Learners need to learn in a clear and unambiguous manner about the risks they face (i.e. sexual health, drug use, exploitation. etc...), prior to their likely exposure to them and the conclusion of their formal education. For most South Asian learners, this means the upper years of primary schools.

- ◆ The national implementation of in-school life skills-based education should actively involve stakeholders, and build support among ministerial and civil society leadership. The goal should be to create life skills structures now and work for incremental improvement over time.

The creation of small local in-school programming should be avoided. Existing life skills stakeholders should strive for sustainability by working with governments to move from project-based in-school extracurricular programming to education sector-supported stand-alone or integrated curriculum (or a blend of these) at the earliest opportunity. Private and religious schools should be included in any national life skills-based education implementation process.

Life skills approaches should be integrated into all government-supported Non-Formal Education programming.

- ◆ National frameworks for the delivery of life skills programming to vulnerable children and adolescents who are not in school should be developed to ensure accountability, coordination and quality control. A major component of such frameworks should be the designation of government bodies that have a mandate for the protection, well-being and development of these children and adolescent, and a description of their role and responsibilities as duty bearers.

Developing life skills programming...

- ◆ In developing life skills programming the following recommendations are made:
 - Life skills-based education for both school environments and for especially vulnerable children and adolescents should learn from each other. In-school programming could benefit from emulating the more concentrated and behaviourally-focused approach of programming for those especially vulnerable. Conversely, programming for those who are not in school could increase their effectiveness by copying the school learning environment, especially its secure and cyclical nature. Both approaches could learn from the "Ten characteristics of successful HIV prevention education programmes" described in section 1.3.
 - When placing life skills in a particular curriculum or course, care should be taken to ensure that this does not preclude the application of life skills to issues outside of the curriculum or course's remit (i.e. placing life skills in a health course may limit the ability of life skills to address non-health issues such as conflict, gender discrimination, etc...).
 - The development of life skills programming for especially vulnerable children and adolescents should be customised to their vulnerabilities and the risks they confront, as well as their needs and situation (i.e. working hours, level of literacy, etc...)
 - When designing the content of life skills programming, the following should be considered:
 - What evidence was used to determine the priorities of learners?
 - Is the content relevant to the learner targeted by life skills programming (i.e. boys or girls, urban or rural, working children or full-time students, etc...)?
 - Do the life skills messages accurately and unambiguously address the vulnerabilities and risks faced by learners? Do they relate to realistic situations and highlight the protective and positive behaviours required? Are there opportunities to practice? Are "hard" topics (i.e. sexual health) taught prior to the age of possible exposure to risks?
 - If the life skills programme is to teach values, whose values is it teaching and are they relevant to the learner?
 - Are wider issues of social exclusion and marginalisation, which contribute to vulnerability, a part of the life skills programme?
 - If the programme involves livelihood or literacy training, is a life skills approach used?

Building life skills programming capacity and confidence...

- ◆ Life skills delivery capacity building activities should (1) improve the length and quality of training of trainer programmes, (2) develop improved models for in-service support, including professional adult supervision for peer educators, and (3) work to increase the confidence of teachers, instructors and peer educators to deliver programming on sensitive and complex issues.
- ◆ Life skills training of trainer programmes should identify the personal competencies of good life skills teachers, instructors and peer educators, and select candidates based upon these criteria. Training programmes should seek to enable trainees to internalise and personalise the life skills learnt before attempting to teach them to others.
- ◆ Life skills programming which use peer educators, should review how they are trained, supported and utilised. Where possible, they should be linked with programme/project and community structures to provide them with credibility and support.

Participation of children and adolescents in life skills-based education...

◆ Child and adolescent learners should play a larger role in life skills programming. This participation should go beyond peer education to include identifying their vulnerabilities and risks, designing programming, monitoring implementation, and evaluating results. There is also a need to include children and adolescents in programming governance structures.

3.4 Building acceptance of life skills programming

Creating a supportive environment for the practice of life skills...

◆ Life skills-based education should work to develop an environment in which learners may use their new skills, and create opportunities for learners to practice and meaningfully use these skills outside the classroom. At a broader level, life skills programming should work to increase the social and political participation and economic power of children and adolescents; challenge negative social representations of them; and, ensure the recognition of their rights to self-determination.

◆ Life skills-based education should move beyond only providing skills for individual-level solutions to addressing wider societal challenges such as poverty, exclusion, and marginalisation, and providing learners, as both individuals and collectives, the means to address these issues.

Advocating and orienting politicians, policy makers, and societal leaders...

◆ Life skills-based education initiatives should advocate with decision makers to build their support, and to engage their leadership. Advocacy planning should be a component of all programming.

Building support in communities and schools for life skills programming...

◆ Life skills-based education initiatives must strengthen community mobilisation efforts to confront complacency and denial, and allow life skills programming to occur. Projects and programmes should consider the extension of life skills programming to parents or to parents and children together.

3.5 Coordination, networking and linkages

Programme coordination...

◆ All life skills stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, should seek to share information on their life skills programming, and to coordinate their interventions where possible. They should commit to the ongoing development of their staff in this area.

Major stakeholders should commit to the bringing together of all life skills stakeholders through supporting networks and forums, and facilitating increased collaboration within and between governments and non-governmental organisations.

Leadership and networking on life skill-based education...

- ◆ Life skills stakeholders should promote the incorporation of all in-school programming under the leadership of national or sub-national education ministries. They should also encourage the active involvement and leadership of ministries in life skills programming for vulnerable children and adolescents who are not in school. All life skills programming for HIV prevention should be coordinated with national HIV/AIDS coordinating bodies.
- ◆ Major life skills stakeholders should promote an ambitious standard for life skills-based education among their partners, which focuses on the experiential nature of the learning and behavioural outcomes, and includes the linkage of life skills programming to wider societal challenges.
- ◆ Major life skills stakeholders should play a leadership role in promoting life skills through policy and advocacy work, pilot projects, capacity building, monitoring tools development, and the creation of networks. These leading stakeholders should work to ensure that life skills-based education is included in policy documents such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), education sector plans, and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), and programme documents like National AIDS Control Programmes (NACP) and education Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp). They should assist in establishing standards, supporting orientation and training programmes, funding pilot initiatives, and promoting government involvement and oversight, particularly for especially vulnerable children and adolescents who are not in school.
- ◆ At a national level, life skills stakeholders should undertake a mapping of life skills activities. This could be a first activity of any national level life skills forum or network.
- ◆ Major life skills stakeholders should seek to educate others, particularly governments and donors, on what can reasonably be accomplished, given the novelty and complexity of life skills, resource and capacity limitations, the absence of a supportive environment, and a lack of needed services, as well as the challenges of working with vulnerable populations. Efforts are needed to resist the tendency of governments and donors to see life skills as an "add-on" to existing work.
- ◆ Where required, advocacy efforts should be undertaken with national and sub-national governments to ensure the appointment of nodal ministries and focal points within ministries for life skills-based education. This should cover both in-school programming and programming for those especially vulnerable who are not in school.

Linking children and adolescents to services...

- ◆ Major stakeholders should work to ensure that the services necessary for the complete practice of life skills are available and accessible to children and adolescents. Such services could be provided directly by life skills programming or indirectly through other interventions.

ANNEX A

Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA Conclusions and Follow Up

Conclusions and follow up from UNESCO's *Report on the Inter-Agency Working group on Life Skills in EFA*²⁵

- *There is further clarification of life skills-based education as a process, ie involving development of knowledge, attitudes (and values etc) and skills to be able to cope with new challenges throughout life, - as such life skills-based ed is a process to be applied to various learning areas, not a domain or subject in itself*
- *Life skills education is closely linked to sustainable human development through its objective of fostering human capabilities in present and future generations.*
- *A life skills-based approach to education should cover four dimensions:*
 - 1) *the individual dimension;*
 - 2) *the social dimension;*
 - 3) *the cognitive / reflective dimension; and*
 - 4) *the instrumental dimension.*
- *The four pillars of learning was seen as a possible platform for a life skills approach to quality education.*
- *The conceptual framework for a "life skills approach" to quality education should focus on operationalizing and monitoring the approach.*
- *Life skills are psychosocial skills which can be applied to specific learning domains and socio-cultural contexts.*
- *'Life Skills Education' can be briefly described as having the following elements:*
 - *content that includes a balance of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills*
 - *uses interactive and learner-centred teaching methods.*
 - *includes behaviour change/development as part of its objectives*
 - *is based on participant needs (i.e. based on situation analysis and relates to real life)*
 - *is (therefore) gender-sensitive and rights based throughout*
- *Quality education curricula need to be context-specific, and competency-based.*
- *Assessment of life skills-based education (LSBE) at the local level and individual level must be based on observed changes in a learner's acquisition and use of knowledge, the expression of values and attitudes, development of skills, and interactions with the social and physical environment.*
- *It is important to realise that proxy indicators are not necessarily comprehensive descriptors on their own. Ultimately, multiple sources of information should be used and triangulated.*
- *Emphasis should be given to assisting countries in setting up measurable life skills education programmes related to specific learning areas/domains, e.g. that aim both at improving the general quality of education as well as enabling the learner to cope with new challenges.*

25 UNESCO, Report on the Inter-Agency Working group on Life Skills in EFA, (UNESCO: Paris, 2004, Pp.12)

Matrix of Formal In-School Life Skills-Based Education in South Asia

Coverage	Grades/Age Coverage	Delivery Mechanism	Content	Evidence Base	Measuring Behaviour	Teacher Training	Notes
AFGHANISTAN							
National coverage of the Life Skills Curriculum by 2005-06	Actual: Grades I-III (Grade I starts in 2005) Planned: To be linked to Social Studies Curriculum in higher grades	Stand-alone curriculum Caring for the environment, and peace skills (i.e. problem skills, friendship, and reconciliation)	Curriculum has six themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-awareness/Self-efficacy Personal skills (i.e. respect, time management, hygiene) Life at home (i.e. home work, nutrition, safety) Manners in social relationships (i.e. helping others, cooperation, etc...) Caring for the environment Peace skills (i.e. problem solving, reconciliation, etc...) Other issues include sexual and substance abuse, character/morals, diversity, and gender	Limited data available on the vulnerabilities and risks confronting children/adolescents in Afghanistan, though conflict resolution and land mine safety are seen as major issues	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation on Life Skills Curriculum but no specific training No in-service teacher support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills Curriculum is activity-based and assessed by teacher observation Ministry of Education has taken a leadership role in this initiative Life skills are being addressed in a new non-formal education (NFE) curriculum
BANGLADESH							
Actual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No government-led life skills-based education in formal schools BRAC is piloting life skills-based education in some secondary schools Planned: Ministry of Education agreed that UNICEF and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board can start experimental work with life skills in secondary schools	-	-	-	Limited data on the risks and vulnerabilities confronting children and adolescents in Bangladesh	-	Some teachers received training in life skills-based education from various projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing interest of education ministries and the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs in life skills, after the national workshop: Life Skills-Based Education for Healthy Living UNICEF supporting consultancy to develop life skills curriculum for secondary schools. There are also possibilities to build life skills into UNICEF's primary level child-friendly schools initiatives Some discussions on including life skills in the Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TOI-SEP) Hard to Reach project is one of the most developed NFE life skills programmes in South Asia

Coverage	Grades/Age Coverage	Delivery Mechanism	Content	Evidence Base	Measuring Behaviour	Teacher Training	Notes
BHUTAN							
<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In secondary school, 19,000 Bhutan Scouts have received life skills-based education Save the Children USA (SC/USA) supports School Parental Education Activity <p>Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50,000 scouts receive life skills-based education by 2008 UNFPA to support an in-school life skills-based education pilot project 	<p>Actual:</p> <p>Scouts cover those 12-18 years old</p> <p>Planned:</p> <p>UNFPA intends to start work with students and young people 11-26 years old</p>	<p>Actual:</p> <p>Extra-curricular activities managed by Bhutan Scouts, using teachers who are scouting leaders and Scout peer educators (PE)</p> <p>Planned:</p> <p>UNFPA pilot life skills programme will be integrated into two courses, and extracurricular clubs</p>	<p>Actual:</p> <p>Scout's programming follows the ten core life skills, plus HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Planned:</p> <p>UNFPA pilot curriculum will focus 75% on life skills and 25% on adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health's Youth HIV/AIDS Study completed in 2004, with UNICEF support (Not yet released) Situation Analysis of Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health completed by Save the Children in 2005 	-	<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 160 scout leaders and 98 PE trained by SC/USA in life skills 2002-04, UNFPA trained 60 teachers on ARSH with life skills focus; manual developed <p>Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNFPA/ARSH manuals to be distributed; 60 school teachers, counselors and health coordinators to be trained on ARSH in 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scout PE expected to work in their communities Small population and strong administrative system allows for the relatively uncomplicated and rapid implementation of education programmes Department of Youth Culture and Sports is UNFPA's partner Coordination needs to be strengthened among non-governmental organisations, development partners, and government in the area of life skills
INDIA							
<p>Actual:</p> <p>Adolescent Education Programme (AEP) for all secondary school students by 2006 (33,000,000 students)</p> <p>Planned:</p> <p>Integration of life skills into primary school curriculum</p>	<p>Actual:</p> <p>AEP covers adolescents in Grades IX to XII</p> <p>Planned:</p> <p>Primary school initiative covers Grades I-VIII</p>	<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AEP uses blended approach combining integration into language/science classes, extracurricular HIV prevention, and Socially Useful and Productive Work (SUPW) – the appropriate combination is determined by states and union territories Uses Nodal Teachers (NT) and PE NT required to use participatory methods <p>Planned:</p> <p>Primary school initiative will deliver life skills, depending upon the state and its contextualisation of the initiative into either a stand alone subject or integrated into other subjects</p>	<p>AEP delivers a curriculum which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing Up HIV/AIDS Life Skills Outreach Activities 	<p>Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Behaviour (KAPB) Survey (2001) used in design of AEP. Will be repeated in 2005-06</p>	<p>AEP will develop and measure behavioural indicators, including those related to sexual behaviours</p>	<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AEP NT/PE trained in 5 day course Guidelines for teacher education created and finalised - National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) <p>Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piloting of NCTE guidelines Model syllabus developed on the basis of the NCTE guidelines and implemented at state and national levels Integration of life skills into Indira Gandhi National Open University's teacher training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AEP is developed by the national Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development and the National AIDS Control Organisation for implementation by the Departments of Education of 28 states and seven union territories AEP imposes a mandatory minimum content and required methodology but allows state and union territory governments to add issues of local importance and contextualise the content based upon local sensitivities By 2006, HIV prevention will be integrated into the Department of Elementary Education's second chance learning programme: the Alternative Innovative Education Scheme (AIES)

Coverage	Grades/Age Coverage	Delivery Mechanism	Content	Evidence Base	Measuring Behaviour	Teacher Training	Notes
MALDIVES							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Education is running the UNFPA supported pilot Life Skills Project in three government and one private schools in Malé, as well as a government school on another atoll In 2003, UNICEF delivered a life skills programme, with a focus on HIV/AIDS, to 500 young people on three atolls, including Malé 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades VIII-IX in government schools Grades VI-X in private school 	Stand-alone curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Assertiveness Values/Self-esteem Self-awareness Decision making Anger management Conflict resolution Media relationships Relationships Peer pressure Gender roles HIV/AIDS Conception/Pregnancy 	National Reproductive Health Survey (2005) highlighted important issues for Maldives' adolescents, including sexual health and drug use	-	<p>Some teachers and school counsellors participating in the Life Skills Project have received facilitation training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF is supporting initiatives to improve the quality of teaching Opportunity to develop a life skills approach for the delivery of WHO and UNICEF's recently developed Teacher's Exercise Book for HIV Prevention Opportunity to strengthen collaboration between UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF on life skills programming in the Maldives 	
NEPAL							
<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Life Skills Education Programme (NLSEP) integrated into entire health curriculum In 2005, Ministry of Education (MoE) is piloting the curriculum in Grades I-II only in 50 schools in ten districts By the end of 2006, MoE/UNICEF will finish piloting the entire curriculum in four districts <p>Planned:</p> <p>In 2005/2006, National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC) will use Global Fund monies for life skills-based HIV prevention work in secondary schools in six high-risk districts bordering India</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health curriculum covers Grades I-X HIV/AIDS is covered in Grades II-X 	Integrated into the national health curriculum, which is a core curriculum	NLSEP has a specific focus on HIV/AIDS and drug use prevention, but also covers broader health issues	<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adolescent KAPB study conducted in 2002 used in NLSEP design UNICEF held in-school focus groups in its four pilot districts <p>Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF will do a baseline study in its pilot districts in late 2005. Will repeat survey in 2006 NCASC will do KAP study in its six districts 	<p>Several sexual behaviour surveys (covering different age groups) will be completed by UN agencies in 2005-06: UNDP/GFATM in 6 districts, UNFPA in 2 districts, UNAIDS in 4 districts, UNHCR in 2 districts, UNESCO in 2 cities (street children only), and UNICEF in 4 districts</p>	<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of Trainers' manual developed In 2005, 1200 teachers from four MoE/UNICEF pilot districts trained for seven days in life skills and HIV/AIDS <p>Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training to be held in 34 Education Training Centres and placed in annual refresher courses which all teachers attend. The NLSEP will probably occupy a half day of this five day course Teachers involved in Global Fund work will be trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Curriculum Development Centre and the National Centre for Education Development, MoE have played a advocacy and leadership roles Plans to roll-out the life skills curriculum nationally are now being developed UNICEF is supporting the Quality Education Resource Package initiative to improve the quality of teaching in 60 districts While not a life skills activity, UNICEF is supporting the interactive youth radio show Chaiting with My Best Friend NCASC designated MoE as the coordinator for all in-school HIV/AIDS programming

Coverage	Grades/Age Coverage	Delivery Mechanism	Content	Evidence Base	Measuring Behaviour	Teacher Training	Notes
PAKISTAN							
<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF delivers the Empowerment of Adolescents Project (EAP) to in-school adolescents as an extracurricular activity in six districts World Population Foundation delivers life skills to some secondary schools in Grades VIII-X <p>Planned:</p> <p>MoE's Curriculum Wing is working with others to develop the generic Life Skills-Based Education Package for introduction into secondary schools in 2006. This is not a curriculum change</p>	EAP covers secondary school students	EAP extracurricular activities delivered by NGO partners in schools. Training done by teachers, NGO staff and PE	<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Juvenile Justice Corporal Punishment Empowerment HIV/AIDS Child Participation <p>Planned:</p> <p>Generic Life Skills-Based Education Package will have a major focus on HIV prevention</p>	National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) and UNICEF have completed a national study of the behaviours of in-school adolescents. This will support the development of the generic life skills package	-	EAP offers a 5-day training course to teachers and PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoE has no plans in the short-term to introduce life skills, though the curriculum is currently being reviewed. In Pakistan life skills-based education is often delivered "informally" in the education sector as "in-school extra-curricular" activities, usually offered by non-government organisations with limited coverage. Delivery is done with the tacit approval of local authorities but limited oversight UNICEF is promoting child-friendly learning in primary schools NACP has identified life skills-based education as a tool for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and wants it incorporated into the formal school system as a part of its Youth Prevention Strategy
SRI LANKA							
<p>Actual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Competencies Programme (LCP) will eventually reach 1,200,000 students in 6000 secondary schools Life skills concept is integrated into primary curriculum <p>Planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCP expansion to lower grades by 2007 Plan to integrate life skills across the secondary school curriculum (two skills per subject) 	<p>Actual:</p> <p>LCP covers Grades VII-IX</p> <p>Planned:</p> <p>Expansion of LCP down to Grade VI</p>	LCP is a stand-alone core curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based upon the ten core life skills from WHO's Skills for Life. Limited sexual and reproductive health content LCP is managed by the Social Science Department and coordinated with Science and Health and Physical Education Departments 	In 2004, held the National Survey on Emerging Issues among Adolescents in Sri Lanka. The findings are to be integrated into a revised LCP	-	LCP offers four days of initial training to teachers and five days of training to In-Service Advisors (ISA). This is followed by semi-annual review workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of coordination between the Ministries of Education and Health, from the policies to the local levels. Local health workers support the delivery of LCP in schools LCP teachers do not perceive that their subject is respected by other teachers Inter-subject coordination for HIV/AIDS is not clear While not a life skills activity, UNICEF is supporting an interactive youth radio programme

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