

LSCE Measurement Instrument – 8 Life Skills

ADVOCACY BRIEF

Measuring Life Skills in the context of Life Skills and
Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa



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The LSCE Measurement Instrument Package

Teaching and learning life skills are incredibly important for empowering children and young people to achieve success in education, employment and personal goals. Nevertheless, few education systems have integrated life skills into their education systems. One of the reasons for this is challenges concerning the lack of knowledge as to how life skills can be measured, assessed and evaluated.

Building on the regional [Life Skills and Citizenship Education](#) (LSCE) framework in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), UNICEF and The World Bank have developed this LSCE Measurement Instrument, to measure the national level of grade 7 students' scores in eight life skills as national large-scale assessment.

This LSCE Measurement Instrument Package contains:

1. Advocacy Brief

Outlining the aim, purpose, benefits and costs of applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument.

2. Application Guidelines

Outlining the instrument design, recommended process and sampling as well as analysis of results of applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument.

3. Measurement Instrument

Containing the assessment tools for applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument, namely:

a. Life Skills Item Booklets (8)

Producing the life skills scores of the students targeted by the application of the LSCE Measurement Instrument.

b. Background Questionnaires (3)

Collecting background information of those students, teachers and schools targeted by the application of the LSCE Measurement Instrument.

The instrument and all relevant documents are available in English and Standard Arabic.

Disclaimer: UNICEF and The World Bank collaborated in developing this LSCE Measurement Instrument for the use of measuring life skills as defined under the MENA [Life Skills and Citizenship Education](#) (LSCE) framework, through a national, sample-based large-scale assessment at grade 7 level. Applying the instrument for any other use than its original purpose is not advised, and it is required to consult with UNICEF and The World Bank beforehand, as it may lead to an inadequate application that can result in wrong conclusions. The LSCE Measurement Instrument is intended for the use only by the recipient and is not to be shared with other parties or the public through any means, without the prior permission of UNICEF and The World Bank.

For more information, please contact

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1. Aim of Applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument

In today's complex, fast-changing, global, digital and often challenging environment, life skills are widely considered a necessity so that children and young people, regardless of their background, can survive and thrive. Nevertheless, to date few education systems globally, and especially in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, have integrated life skills into their education system. Some of the reasons for this are challenges concerning the lack of knowledge as to what life skills are, how life skills can be taught and learnt, and how life skills can be measured, assessed and evaluated.

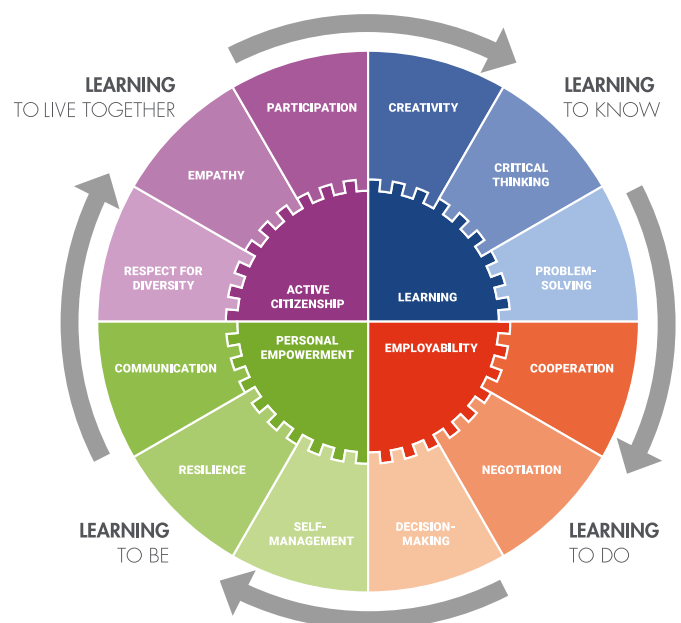
Life skills are transferable skills that enable individuals to deal with everyday life, and to progress and succeed in school, work and society. Life skills are comprised of skills, attitudes, values and behaviour – defined in terms of their empowerment that they offer individuals in their daily lives, their social benefits and contribution towards societal change.

Life skills can be taught and learned best by practicing life skills through simulation of real-world activities and reflecting on real-life experience. Especially children and young people's participation and cooperation have proven a strong practice for learning life skills. For the acquisition of life skills, it is essential to offer a safe learning environment, an open and accepting classroom and school environment and coherence between values being taught and values embedded in teaching and learning.

Life skills can be measured through several approaches and instruments. However, the most challenging is the multi-dimensional characteristic and different attributes of each life skill. Multiple measures may be needed to capture the different components of a single life skill. Further, life skills contain a combination of knowledge, skills, attributes

and values with cognitive and non-cognitive elements. Most existing valid and reliable instruments are privately owned and not available for public use. Further, most tools have not been developed for, nor tested in low-income countries and across different social-cultural contexts, such as the context of the Middle East and North Africa.

For that reason, the **Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) framework** has been developed to provide a holistic, lifelong and rights-based vision of education that maximizes the potential of all children and young people in the region. The framework aims at better equipping them to create meaning out of knowledge, and to face the transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to work, and from unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship. A set of twelve core life skills, most essential in the regional context, has been identified using the four-dimensional learning model: 'Learning to Know', 'Learning to Do', 'Learning to Be', and 'Learning to Live Together'.



Aiming at higher-order life outcomes, life skills and citizenship education aims at equipping individuals with a set of skills allowing them to learn, to work, to be personally empowered, and to be active citizens.

- **‘Learning to Know’** or the Cognitive Dimension: abilities underscoring the importance of curiosity, creativity and critical thinking for gaining a better understanding of the world and people.
- **‘Learning to Do’** or the Instrumental Dimension: abilities for applying what has been learned into practice, and how to concretely navigate demanding situations while being efficient and productive.
- **‘Learning to Be’** or the Individual Dimension: abilities aiming at the development of the complete person,

thus allowing to act with ever greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility.

- **‘Learning to Live Together’** or the Social and Citizenship Education Dimension: abilities aiming at building inclusive identities consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles. Identifies the importance of adopting a human rights-based approach to learning.

The past three years’ efforts went into developing an instrument to measure life skills identified within the framework. The instrument will enable the evaluation of education systems, through identifying the national level of students’ scores in eight life skills and distribution across the school-aged population.

2. Purpose of Applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument

The instrument provides a standardized approach and instrument for measuring life skills tailored to the MENA region, building on the most recent evidence, available tools and effective innovations. It has been designed as a **national large-scale assessment** conducted on a representative sample of the school-aged population at grade 7. The instrument aims at assessing average levels of life skills scores and distribution across such school-aged populations to identify inequalities and gaps. Findings from applying the instrument will provide evidence for policy and practice regarding education system-level performance, which also allow associations with teaching practices.

As of the **LSCE framework**, this **LSCE 8-Skills Measurement Instrument** has been designed and tested to assess eight life skills – **Creativity, Problem-Solving, Negotiation, Decision-Making, Self-Management, Respect for Diversity, Empathy, and Participation.** Measurement instruments

for the remaining four life skills of the LSCE framework – **Critical-Thinking, Cooperation, Resilience, and Communication** – are currently under development.

The instrument is not designed for and cannot be used for

below purposes, as the types of questions included in the instrument will not function under these conditions and for this purpose:

- Any form of examinations, including high stakes exams, testing and grading.
- Any form of formative assessment or other use by teachers in the classroom.
- Any use of questions in teaching and learning material or teacher training.

In summary, the LSCE Measurement Instrument **is not aimed for its inclusion in the development of incentives programmes, school accountability systems, teacher assessment, or students gradings.**

The instrument is only useful and provides accurate results if teachers and students are not familiar with the questions prior to the assessment. This is to avoid 'teaching to the test' which leads to inadequate results and social-desirability bias (the tendency of respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favourably by others). Therefore, UNICEF and The World Bank

reserve the right for pre-approval of the use of the instrument.

Further, the instrument has been designed for the use by national governments within their respective countries and there is currently no political interest for the comparison of assessment results between countries who apply the instrument.

3. Benefits of Applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument

Improving life outcomes through education policies and targeted interventions, requires an understanding of life skills scores and their distribution across the school-aged population.

Integrating life skills into national education systems and targeted interventions, through teaching content and the teaching and learning process, requires alignment with average life skills scores.

Monitoring life skills acquisition, and hence the effectiveness of education policies and targeted interventions, requires regular assessment of life skills scores and the trend over time.

Once a country has applied this **LSCE Measurement Instrument**, the findings will inform policymakers and educators towards:

- **Understand levels and distribution of life skills** across the school-aged population,
- **Inform the nature and scope of required interventions** to foster life skills teaching and learning,
- **Track the progress of policies and interventions** designed to enhance life skills.

Assessing learning and understanding the state of play on life skill scores in a country is the first step towards realizing an education system's full potential to enhance the learning experience.

The instrument **can be applied in every country in the region**. The developed instrument is not based on any national curricula as it focuses on measuring life skills scores regardless of disciplinary content.

4. Costs of Applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument

As the instrument has been designed as a national large-scale assessment conducted on a representative sample of the school-aged population at grade 7, the costs highly depend on the size of the school-aged population and application of the instrument. **For the recommended design of applying the current LSCE 8-Skills Measurement Instrument**, costs are estimated at:

SAMPLE SIZE:

min. 4,500 students (ca. 150 schools, with 30 students per school)

APPLICATION TIME:

approx. 2 hours (90 items: 60 item booklets, 30 background questionnaire)

ESTIMATED COSTS:

ca. \$150,000-200,000 per country (ca. \$35-45 per student)

The implementation of the LSCE measurement study within each participating country can vary in its costs for different reasons – below a list of elements that may contribute to the implementation costs:

- **Availability of a list of schools eligible to participate in the study:**
the recommended ‘two-stage sampling design’ requires a comprehensive list of eligible schools in the country. If such a list does not exist, relevant efforts and costs to establish or update such a list need to be taken into consideration.
- **The number of schools or students participating in the study:**
the recommended sampling allows to generate population estimates of life skills scores. If the participating country

aims at additional estimate precision for certain school types (e.g. private vs. public) or certain student’s sub-population (e.g. refugee vs. national), the number of participating schools and students might need to be larger.

- **Logistical and administration efforts for study implementation:**
the recommended ‘rotated booklet design’ randomly assigns each participating student one of the eight item booklets (each with assessment items for 2 out of the 8 life skills). If the participating country aims at applying a different design, assessing more than two life skills scores per student, relevant costs for logistical and administration efforts, due to a longer application time, need to be taken into consideration.

5. Interest of Applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument

Countries interested in conducting the LSCE measurement study by applying this LSCE Measurement Instrument, are encouraged to reach out to Country Offices of UNICEF and The World Bank in the respective country, or contact the UNICEF MENA Regional Office through lsce-m@unicef.org.

Countries interested in applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument will then receive the:

2. Application Guidelines

Outlining the instrument design, recommended process and sampling as well as analysis of results of applying the LSCE Measurement Instrument.

Following the submission of an ‘Expression of Interest Form for the Application of the LSCE Measurement Instrument’ and approval by UNICEF and The World Bank, countries will receive the:

3. Measurement Instrument

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a. Life Skills Item Booklets (8)

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The instrument and all relevant documents are available in English and Standard Arabic.

Further technical advice can be provided through relevant UNICEF and The World Bank colleagues:

UNICEF Education Team from the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa

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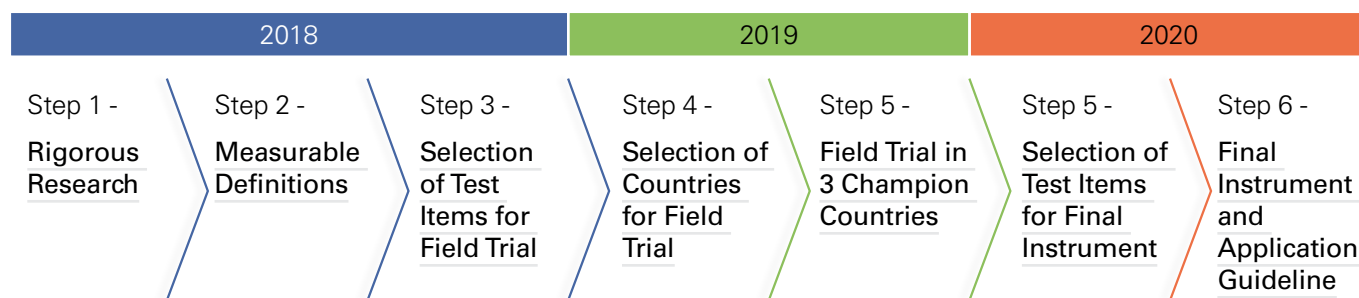
Ms. Dina N. Abu-Ghaida, Lead Economist dabughaida@worldbank.org

For further resources on the LSCE Initiative please take a look at our [LSCE Website](#):

- LSCE [Analytical Mapping](#), December 2017 [English, Arabic]
- LSCE [Conceptual and Programmatic Framework](#), December 2017 [English, Arabic, French]
 - o LSCE Conceptual and Programmatic Framework – Executive Summary [English, Arabic, French]
 - o LSCE Conceptual and Programmatic Framework – Twelve Core Life Skills [English, Arabic, French]
- LSCE in Action – [Country Examples](#), June/September 2018 [English, Arabic]
- LSCE [Measuring Life Skills](#), January 2020 [English, Arabic]
 - o LSCE Measuring Life Skills – Executive Summary [English, Arabic, French]
 - o LSCE Measuring Life Skills – Annexes: Compendium of Tools for Measuring Life Skills [English]

Annex 1: Design and Field Trial of the LSCE Measurement Instrument

The LSCE Measurement Instrument is a combined effort of UNICEF and The World Bank to support the development of a new instrument to measure life skills, as outlined in the LSCE framework. Below outlines the process and key steps of developing and field trial the instrument since 2018:



First step towards developing this instrument was rigorous research on existing approaches and instruments to measure life skills. Out of those, only instruments proven to be most valid and reliable have been further considered to inform the development of the LSCE Measurement Instrument.

- [Measuring Life Skills in the context of Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa](#) (UNICEF and The World Bank 2019), including a [library of existing instruments to measure life skills](#)

In a **second step** ‘measurable definitions’ of life skills have been developed, considering their multi-dimensional characters and cognitive and non-cognitive elements. This has been translated into four ‘attributes’ per life skill to capture the different components of each single life skill.

The **third step** combined both previous steps by selecting ‘test items’ from those instruments most reliable and relevant within the defined measurable definitions of life skills. Further test items have been developed by experts to have enough

items for each attribute within each life skill to be tested.

Jointly with national experts from three ‘champion countries’ these test items have been reviewed against cultural and language relevance to ensure contextualization for the region in a **fourth step**. The three champion countries – Egypt, State of Palestine, Tunisia – have been selected in order to represent much of the diversity across the region so that the final instrument can be used widely across countries.

In the **fifth step**, for each of the life skills 45 test items have been tested in the three ‘champion countries’ Egypt, the State of Palestine, and Tunisia. This was done through a long-planned and coordinated assessment approach at the country level, under the supervision of three National Research Coordinators, especially selected for this task and already involved in the development of the instrument.

The **sixth step** built on the data collected during the field trial in the three countries. Rigorous data analysis has been applied

for selecting 30 test items that worked best out of the 45 items tested per life skills. Statistical analysis has been used to select those items with best 'model-fit', defined through the measurable definition of the life skills and the four attributes per skills, and those items most 'reliable' and 'consistent' across countries. This selection has then been further validated through an expert group.

In a **final step**, all this has undergone final quality assurance and had been consolidated for the final package, reflecting on the recommended study design and corresponding application guidelines, Life Skills Item Booklets and Students, Teachers and School Principals Background Questionnaires. The LSCE Measurement Instrument package is now ready for country-level application as a national large-scale assessment for a representative sample of the school-aged population at grade 7.



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This instrument represents a significant collaboration between UNICEF and The World Bank.

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Email: lsce-m@unicef.org.

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Cover picture: Zeina, 8 years, in a UNICEF-supported Makani centre in Irbid. Her favourite activity is painting.
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End picture: Abdul Qader (wearing green and black), 12 years, with his friends in his UNICEF-supported Makani centre in Irbid. (© UNICEF/UN0218795/Shennaw)