Education 2030

ARAB REGION
OUTCOME STATEMENT

Towards inclusive and equitable quality learning opportunities for all

November 2018

The Statement has been prepared by 19 Arab States of UNESCO and Arab Regional Support Group for Education 2030 based on the implementation of the Dubai Roadmap for Education 2030 (2017-2018) and the outcomes of inter-governmental policy and technical forum conferences and meetings held in 2017 and 2018.

I. Introduction

A region of renowned civilizations and contribution to humanity, the Arab Region has become one of paradoxes: Young, highly educated, dynamic, well-endowed nations, on the one hand, and multiple protracted armed conflicts, high level of youth unemployment, volatile and vulnerable state of existence, extreme inequalities and disparities, on the other.

While the region indeed made tremendous achievements, many countries in the region have unfortunately seen their developmental gains significantly reversed primarily due to the protracted nature of conflict, while others struggle to improve the quality of education and achieve nationally set goals.

Available evidence shows that national education systems are struggling to deliver the outcomes needed for individual, economic and societal development. Indeed, children, youth and adults in the Arab Region are facing unprecedented challenges in terms of learning, employment, and social cohesion. For instance:

- 22 million Arab children are still out of school or at risk of dropping out. This is coupled with a growing number of youths in the region who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). NEET accounts for up to 45% in some countries.
- The quality of education is deteriorating. For example, results in the 2015 TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) for grade-8 mathematics indicate that while some countries have shown improvement as compared to 2011 results, six out of the bottom eight countries surveyed are in the Arab region, six have a mean score lower than 500, which is the global center point, and the remaining two score below 400. The gaps between the top achievers and those at the bottom are also more pronounced in the Arab Region as compared to other regions.
- The number of adults possessing low level of literacy skills is relatively high in the region (more than 50 million adults) and appears to be on the rise particularly in crisis-affected countries. This is exasperated by structural challenges, such as lack of vision of lifelong and life wide learning, and of comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, insufficient financial investment, and poor quality of educators and programmes.
- In most Arab countries, the expansion of educational opportunities has yet to translate into economic growth. The average rate of youth unemployment in the Arab region is the highest in the world, reaching 30%, which is more than double of the world average. This comes together with a severe skills mismatch with inverse correlation between education and employment resulting in low return on education. An additional year of schooling adds around 5.4 per cent to earning compared to the world average of 7 per cent.
- This is compounded by a value deficit with the erosion of social cohesion and increasing incidence of violence and conflict that is detriment to this region. This is evident in some countries where adolescents and youth are being exposed to violence and instability leading to staggering consequences: More than 70% of adolescents who died in 2015 due to collective violence lived in the Arab region.

Responding to significant challenges, countries in the region are undergoing continuous education and public sector reforms leading to positive achievements during the Education for All (EFA) era with continuous efforts exerted thereafter.

II. Perspectives and priorities

Cognizant of the above, we, Ministries of Education in the Arab Region, whole-heartedly embraced Education 2030 Agenda as the prime opportunity to transform our national education systems into one of resilience and to contribute to the realization of our national development goals and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as a whole.

Given the diversity and uniqueness of the region, it is extremely challenging to advance on the region-specific education agenda. Nevertheless, evidence points to three broad-based issues and priorities of common concern, as follows:

1. *Migration, displacement and education*

Ensuring access to safe and conducive learning environments at all levels, providing opportunities to gain life-saving and -enhancing knowledge and skills, supporting teachers and educators, and building resilient education systems

The most significant challenge to progress in the majority of countries in the region is armed conflict which results in millions of forcibly displaced populations and which in turn exacerbates inequality, poverty, exclusion and marginalization. The devastating impact of crisis puts pressures on conflict-affected and host governments and communities to ensure provision of access to quality education at all levels, including higher education, to internally displaced persons and refugee communities, including girl and female learners and those with special needs. At the same time, the region has seen large-scale movements of people, particularly younger populations, in search of better opportunities both within their countries and beyond. Available evidence shows that the more educated they are, the more likely they move and that immigrants and migrants encounter challenges in the access to education and continuation of learning.

Of critical policy and programmatic issues are: provision of policy and legal frameworks; continued support to basic education; role of non-formal and informal education for certified alternative and diverse learning pathways; recognition of prior learning; support for different languages of instruction; preparedness and competences of teachers and education personnel; quality data management; expansion of relevant learning opportunities in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education; and inter-sectoral collaboration, principally with child protection, health and nutrition (i.e. school feeding). These issues cross national borders and thus require regionally and mutually supportive strategies and partnerships to address them in the context of strengthening the humanitarian and development nexus.

2. *Quality and relevance of education*

Ensuring coherent, holistic, systematic and sector-wide approaches to addressing the dimensions of quality and relevance in education

Quality and relevance at all levels and alternative forms of learning are central to the Education 2030 Agenda and have long been the priority of all countries in the region. Nevertheless, an analysis of international large-scale assessment (TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS) and national examinations show low and, in some instances, further declining performance, while the difficulty in the transition to the world of work in the region results in high youth unemployment and skill mismatch. At the same time, education systems in the Arab region have traditionally been focused on schooling rather than learning, without really focusing on skills acquisition. Moreover, while important tensions between quality and equity are prevailing in many education systems, additional challenges to balancing quality, equity and accountability have occurred over the last decade following the Arab spring movements in several countries.

Regardless of the state of development in the region, there are numerous challenges to this effect both at system level (policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation) and content (curriculum, teaching, and learning) levels. This requires a transformation of the education system in terms of what we learn and how we learn, and the promotion of open and flexible learning systems that put skills for life and work at the core of the 21st century learning agenda.

Of particular significance is the critical need of the alignment of curriculum, teachers and learning assessment that brings about both pedagogical and socio-economic advantages. The alignment furthers both system cohesiveness and cost-effectiveness and serves as a lever of integrating Education 2030 commitments and dimensions into the curriculum to enhance learning quality, especially with regard to skills development, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and sustainable development, gender equality, peace, and intercultural understanding.

3. *Financing of education:*

Increasing, optimizing use of, and accounting for, investment in education

All countries in the region have traditionally prioritized investment in education. The Gulf countries have recently become very important education donors in the region and beyond. Nevertheless, in recent times, the level of domestic spending in expenditures has plummeted in many countries because of such reasons as armed conflict, structural adjustment. In other countries, while there is high level of investment in education, it does not necessarily result in student achievement. In addition, many countries, including refugee-hosting countries, are highly dependent on external aid, which makes them highly susceptible to external shocks, and unexpected events, and which gravely compromise educational development. Furthermore, the education sector remains severely underfunded particularly to respond to the educational needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized in the region, including forcibly displaced populations.

Therefore, it is critical for countries to prioritize education expenditure, unify services provided by different organizations and strengthen national capacity in planning, managing, and accounting for resources through establishing a system like National Education Accounts, making use of a tool like projection and simulation model and further cultivating the public-private partnerships for innovative financing. At the same time, there is a need to ensure harmonization between the humanitarian and development funding.

III. Commitments and actions

In order to collectively address the above three inter-linked priorities and agree on actions, we adopted two-pronged approach:

1. Biennial Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED)

Since 2015, we have gathered three times and adopted successive Roadmaps in Cairo, Egypt, in December 2015; Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in March 2017; and Dead Sea, Jordan, in November 2018, to discuss national and regional policy and programmatic priorities and agree on how best to operationalize and integrate national commitments to the Agenda at the national level. The Roadmaps focus on five pillars of action, namely Advocacy and Communication, Policy and Planning, Monitoring, Reporting and Financing, and Country Support.

2. Inter-governmental regional, sub-regional and national policy and technical forum

We have contributed to, and benefitted from, opportunities of mutual learning in order to deliberate on concrete issues and challenges related to the SDG4 Targets, learn from innovative and promising practices and reaffirm our commitment to taking further actions, in the following areas:

- Rethinking education in the Arab World through lifelong and life-wide perspectives

- Managing education response to crisis
- Aligning curriculum, assessment and teacher professional development for quality learning
- Revisiting policy and legal frameworks, such as the Arab regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education
- Expanding learning opportunities in higher education institutions in crisis situations
- Promoting literacy and non-formal education
- Implementing education for sustainable development in learning cities
- Ensuring inclusion for all, with particular attention to crisis-affected children and youth
- Improving the curricula contents by integrating concepts and practice of sustainable development and life skills for learning, employability, personal empowerment and active citizenship
- Enhancing the protection-nutrition-education nexus through school feeding
- Strengthening national education systems and capacity in planning, cost and financing of education, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on Education 2030 thematic indicators framework

To support country-led actions and the aforementioned Roadmaps in a coordinated manner and promote regional cooperation and collaboration, ***Arab Regional Support Group for Education 2030*** was constituted in July 2016 and has since supported a number of regional, sub-regional and national initiatives to address regional issues of common concern and provide coordinated, coherent support at all levels. The Group maintains a very strong connection with the Arab regional representation at SDG-Education 2030 Global Steering Committee to ensure and enhance the national-regional-global- nexus.

Recognizing that education is a fundamental human right and reiterating that Education 2030 agenda is inextricably linked with, and contributes to, the realization of our aspirations as set out in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, we, Ministries of Education in the Arab region, together with the Arab Regional Support Group for Education 2030, resolutely reaffirm our collective commitment to continuing to take decisive actions to make progress towards realizing the goal of Education 2030 Agenda.

Our actions for the 2019-2020 period will be guided by the Joint Statement of the Technical Meeting and Dead Sea Commitments as discussed in the Third Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED III, Dead Sea, Jordan, November 2018) and outcome statements and declarations issued at various policy and technical forum held in 2017 and 2018, as annexed. For North Africa, as Member States of the African Union, we equally uphold our commitments to the Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education.

Annex I:	Joint Statement - Regional Technical Meeting on the Alignment of Curriculum, Learning Assessment and Teachers: Third Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (Dead Sea, Jordan, November 2018)
Annex II:	Dead Sea Commitments for 2019-2020 (Dead Sea, Jordan, November 2018)
Annex III:	Tunis Declaration on the Centrality of School Feeding for Education, Inclusive Development and Stability in the Middle East and North Africa Region (Tunis, Tunisia, October 2018)
Annex IV:	Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education: Bridging continental and global education frameworks for the Africa We Want (Nairobi, Kenya, April 2018)
Annex V:	Action Plans and Way Forward: Implementing Education for Sustainable Development in Learning Cities (Aswan, Egypt, March 2018)
Annex VI:	Declaration: Rethinking Education in the Arab Region (Arabic) (Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, December 2017)
Annex VII:	Partnership Framework and Actions: Life Skills and Citizenship Education (November 2017)
Annex VIII:	Outcome Statement: GCED Networking Meeting (Luxor, Egypt, November 2017)
Annex IX:	Sharm El Sheikh Statement: Higher Education in Crisis Situations in the Arab States (Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, March 2017)

Third Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED III)

Aligning Curriculum, Teachers and Learning Assessment to Reach SDG4 Targets in Arab Countries

Dead Sea – Jordan. 4-7 November 2018

Joint Statement of the Participants in the Technical Workshop, Part of the AR-MED III Meeting in the Context of Implementing the SDG4 Dubai Road Map (2017) for the Arab States

Dead Sea - Jordan, 4-6 November 2018

Education 2030

We, the participants in the technical workshop on aligning curriculum, teacher policies and practice, and learning assessment to reach SDG4 targets in Arab States, conducted in the context of the AR-MED III meeting in Jordan, Dead Sea on 4-6 November 2018, reaffirm our commitment towards enhancing education quality in our countries in line with Education 2030 Agenda.

Participants in the technical workshop comprised of officially nominated representatives of Arab Ministries of Education in charge of curriculum, teachers and learning assessment, as well as SDG4 national coordinators.

By aligning curriculum, teacher policy and practice, and learning assessment, we understand putting in place effective mechanisms for these different, yet related educational areas to work cooperatively in order to realize the ambitious and transformative goal of Education 2030 - and leaving no one behind in the spirit of considering education as a fundamental human right. Both the horizontal alignment (i.e. aligning curriculum standards/learning requirements with classroom practices and assessment) and vertical alignment (i.e. alignment of curriculum and curriculum-related areas with national education policies and support systems within national education systems) are important and need to be envisaged based on flexible arrangements by taking learner needs and local contexts into account.

In recent years, the issue of alignment has gained momentum across UNESCO Regions. We express our satisfaction that this workshop has allowed Arab countries to contribute their perspectives to the current international debates on implementing Education 2030 Agenda. Such debates generate ideas and inspire contextually relevant solutions and strategies for reaching SDG4 targets. The Arab countries also emphasize the importance of learning from one another in enhancing the cohesiveness, relevance and effectiveness of our educational systems.

Cognizant of our collective commitments to Education 2030 Agenda, we concur on making the necessary efforts for equipping all learners in our region with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to transform their own lives, as well as their societies by acting as responsible citizens and effective contributors to their families and communities.

We acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of quality education, and commit to ensuring quality education for all children and youth so that:

- All children and youth are healthy, motivated and supported by their parents, as well as equipped with appropriate skills for future work and life;
- They demonstrate effective and relevant learning, which results in broader social and economic gains for society – with behaviours linked to sustainable economic, social and environmental development; culture of peace and non-violence; equity; global citizenship; and cultural diversity.

To this end, we pledge to ensure equitable and inclusive opportunities for all our learners, boys and girls, men and women of all abilities, to access quality education across all education stages, from early childhood development through higher education, with a view of developing learners' full potential as individuals and members of their respective communities.

In the context of our Region affected by multiple protracted crises, we call for special attention to enhancing equitable quality education services for the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as of vulnerable learners in host communities.

We fully support the idea of grounding alignment of curriculum, teacher policies and practice, and learning assessment in shared forward-thinking visions of education and learning, articulated in key national policy documents. Such documents (i.e. curriculum frameworks, teacher policy frameworks, including teacher codes of responsibilities and teacher competencies frameworks, as well as learning assessment frameworks) need to be harmonized with a view to advancing shared education and learning visions consistent with Education 2030 Agenda and rights-based approaches to education. Aligning education and learning with the SDG4 goals implies empowering education systems and people towards reaching a sustainable future.

We can achieve quality education only if teachers and educators are educated, qualified, motivated, empowered and supported. We equally need school leadership and governance that promotes alignment of curriculum, teacher policies and practice, and learning assessment that allows for focusing on learning and collaboration in the context of conducive learning environments.

We need a holistic vision of curriculum that is comprehensive and supported by appropriate learning materials. We need to harness advances in information and communication technologies, including artificial intelligence, to diversify and enrich teaching and learning facilities and processes.

We need education systems and processes that are effectively governed including at school levels, with equitable capabilities and sufficient financing, as well as appropriate planning and monitoring tools.

Recognizing the important role of teachers in ensuring inclusive and customized solutions in quality curriculum development and implementation, as well as in monitoring learning achievements, challenges and progression, we salute the choice of the alignment concept as a means of enhancing synergies between curriculum and curriculum-related areas and collaboration among those working on curriculum, teacher professional development, and learning assessment.

In order to overcome the lack of coordination among national agencies responsible for curriculum, teachers and learning assessment owing to working in silos, we strongly support creative, flexible cooperation and standardization mechanisms to be established and institutionalized at national level. Such mechanisms shall find inspiration in the innovative promising practices shared during our workshop, including the use of opportunities that new technologies provide.

We equally emphasize the role that monitoring and evaluation of educational processes play in enhancing cooperation and synergies among, and cohesiveness of different educational areas. We call upon UNESCO and its SDG4 partners in the Arab Region (i.e. SDG4 Arab Regional Support Group) to reinforce our national monitoring and reporting capacities through appropriate support.

Acknowledging the promising practices in the Arab Region with regard to aligning curriculum, teacher policies and practice, and learning assessment in order to implement the Education Agenda 2030, we are committed to engaging in follow up actions, including advocacy and dissemination of this joint statement at national level.

Our educational communities should benefit from the outcomes of this workshop, and from other SDG4-related activities and programs in the Arab countries. We all agree on the need for substantive studies, including regular monitoring reports based on a shared comprehensive structure/template to be produced in our Region with a view to documenting both the progress achieved in the context of Education 2030 Agenda and the solutions to overcoming challenges and gaps.

We are equally appreciative of the partnership spirit demonstrated at this workshop reuniting:

- Arab country teams;
- Representatives of SDG4 Arab Regional Support Group, including sister UN SDG 4 co-conveners (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP) and international NGOs (Open Society Foundations);
- Consultants and resource persons;
- UNESCO entities (UNESCO Beirut, UNESCO Ramallah, UNESCO Amman, UNESCO Cairo, UNESCO Iraq and UNESCO HQ) and UNESCO Institutes (RCEP and RCQE).

We believe that engaging in effective partnerships is key in implementing Education 2030 Agenda, and we hereby reiterate our interest in and commitment to engaging in educational networking and mutually beneficial communities of practice.

We expect that due visibility is given to this workshop and to our efforts during the three-day deliberations on ways of enhancing learning quality on the basis of aligning curriculum, teacher policies and practice, and learning assessment in the Arab countries. We thus encourage UNESCO and its education partners to make all necessary efforts in disseminating the outcomes of this workshop in the context of future SDG4-related activities at global, regional and national levels.

Member States - Arab Region - Education 2030 - Dead Sea Commitments for 2019-2020 (January 2019)

Actions	Timeline
GENERAL	
Implement commitments made at various conferences and workshops as annexed in Outcome Statement	Ongoing to the end of 2020
ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION	
Continue with awareness campaigns on the Agenda 2030 and Education 2030 in parituclar at all levels.	Ongoing to the end of 2020
Promote sharing of experience and good initiatives at the national and regional levels through the use of different means (including, but not limited to, SDG4 regional web portal - http://education2030-arab-states.org)	Ongoing to the end of 2020
REVIEW AND MONITORING	
Contribute to the National Voluntary Reporting (NVR) for the Agenda 2030 and prepare annual snapshot report on Education 2030 progress	Annually
Undertake first five-year monitoring report on Education 2030	Throughout 2019 and due mid 2020
FINANCING	
Develop initiatives to mobilize domestic and external resources	Ongoing to the end of 2020
COORDINATION AND PARTERNSHIPS	
Expand partnerships with national and regional partners, as well as UNESCO Category II Centers(*) to implement programs and capacity development plans	Ongoing to the end of 2020
POLICY AND PLANNING	
Identify and address policy and programmatic gaps to mainstreaming and promoting SDG4 at national level	Ongoing to the end of 2020
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	
Develop and implement capacity development plan at the Ministries of Education, based on the conducted capacity development needs assessment, including for strategic planning and implementation in Education in Emergencies and for monitoring and evaluation	Development of plan by end of 2017 Implementation of plan ongoing to the end of 2018

(*) UNESCO Category II Centers are associated with UNESCO through formal arrangements approved by the General Conference. They are selected upon proposal by Member State(s), based on the strength of their specialization in one of UNESCO's fields of competence. Through capacity building, knowledge sharing and research, they provide a valuable and unique contribution to the implementation of UNESCO's strategic programme objectives for the benefits of Member States. In the Arab Region, there are five Category II Centers as at March 2017:

- *Regional Centre for Adult Education (ASFEC), Syrs Al Layan, Egypt*
- *Regional Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education in the Arab States (RCECCE), Damascus, Syria*
- *Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP), Sharjah, UAE*
- *Regional Center for Information and Communication Technologies, Manama, Bahrain*
- *Regional Center of Quality and Excellent in Education (RCEQ), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

Partners - Arab Region - Education 2030 - Dead Sea Commitments for 2019-2020 (January 2019)

Actions	Timeline
ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION	
Keep updating the SDG4 web portal (www.education2030-arab-states.org)	Throughout the period
Advocate for greater involvement of other partners, such as the private sector	Throughout the year
Celebrate International Day of Education (24 January 2020)	Jauary 2020
REVIEW AND MONITORING	
Contribut to the regional report of 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report	By end of 2018
Support Member States to undertake first five-year monitoring report on Education 2030	Throughout 2019
Track national commitments to Arab Region Outcome Statement	Throughout the period to mid 2020
FINANCING	
Work towards developing financing strategies to provide the needed support to countries in crisis as well as those affected by it, in consultation with Member States	Throughout the year
COUNTRY SUPPORT (capacity development; technical assistance; policy support, etc.)	
Implement commitments made at various conferences and workshops as annexed in Outcome Statement	Throughout the period
Mainstream/integrate SDG4 into national plans	Throughout the year with concrete support initiatives to be implemented at national level
Build capacity in cost and financing of education	Throughout the year with concrete support initiatives to be implemented at national level
Build statistical capacity to measure/monitor and report on the indicators, including alignment of monitoring of crisis/ humanitarian education plans to Education 2030 Thematic Indicator Framework	Throughout the year with concrete training workshops to be organized at the regional and national level
Support national initiatives within the framework of Education 2030 Agenda, in particular commitments made as indicated in the annexures of Outcome Statement	Throughout the year with concrete support initiatives to be implemented at national level

TUNIS DECLARATION
On the Centrality of School Feeding for Education, Inclusive Development and Stability in the MENA region

Preamble

1- We, Ministers, High Representatives, heads and members of government delegations, gathered in October 2018 in Tunis, at the invitation of H.E. the Minister of Education of Tunisia, to participate in the Tunis Dialogue on the Strategic Role of School Meals in Promoting Education, Inclusive Development and Stability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

2- In the presence of representatives of the African Union, WFP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ALECSO, FAO, UNOPS, the World Bank, multilateral and bilateral organizations.

3- Acknowledging the pivotal role of education systems as a main driver of cultural, social and economic development, as well as the need to mobilize national resources, capacities and expertise to ensure that the school maintains its potential to promote upward social mobility, to allow for social and intellectual development, and to enable learners to manifest their full creative potential.

4- Understanding that a reinforcement of the children's sense of belonging to the school is a requisite for the achievement of educational goals, and that this sense of belonging depends on the school's ability to create an environment that fosters excellence, is respectful of the learner's rights and enshrines the principles of equity and equal opportunities, by providing quality and stimulating education services.

5- Affirming our conviction that school meals embody the above-mentioned values, as they constitute a mechanism to improve access, retention and academic performance, particularly of the most vulnerable children, and can enhance the school experience by bringing life to the educational space; a space which educates on the rules for living together in harmony, contributes to building a sense of belonging, provides nutrition for improved school performance, fosters healthy eating habits, and remains open to the broader community, thus contributing to local economic and social development.

6- In the framework of the MENA Initiative for School Meals and Social Protection, which aims to enhance the effectiveness and broaden the coverage of school feeding programmes;

7- Recognising the efforts of the League of Arab States and its Arab League Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO) to enhance the quality of education systems; as well as resolution no.828 of the Arab Ministerial Council of Social Affairs, which assigned its technical Secretariat to undertake joint programmes to implement activities related to the MENA Initiative for School Meals and Social Protection.

8- Welcoming the African Union's adoption of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025, and in particular its Strategic Objective 02 focusing on a healthy and conducive learning environment to expand access to quality education for all, we adopt this declaration.

A call for action

9- Strengthened, well-targeted and evidence-based school feeding programmes, embedded in national education and social protection systems, are a critical part of the efforts to advance more inclusive and sustainable development. Such programmes, in particular when linked to local economies, agriculture, and productive safety nets systems, can provide significant contributions to accelerating progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (10) Reduced Inequalities, (13) Climate Action, (16) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and (17) Partnerships for the Goals.

10- We express our commitment to enhancing efforts in the area of school feeding, as a means to improving access to education, as well as academic performance, particularly of the most vulnerable children. A quality education, combined with health and nutrition interventions at school, such as school feeding, can play a critical role in contributing to child and adolescent development and building human capital.

11- We stress the need for better governance mechanisms for the management and monitoring of school feeding programmes, as their improvement can result in an optimisation of the available human and material resources to maximise impact.

12- We affirm that achieving the changes we desire in the area of school feeding requires the joint efforts of national governments, civil society and private sector stakeholders. This positive interaction is a precondition for improving the quality and sustainability of school feeding programmes, and for these improvements to contribute to local development of sustainable agriculture.

13- We commend national leaders, governments, institutions and their partners, recognizing the key role of regional institutions and organizations, on their efforts to change the lives of millions of children through more comprehensive programmes, renewing our commitment to reforms that augment the effectiveness of school feeding at national level, particularly in support of the most vulnerable children.

14- We appreciate the efforts of the World Food Programme (WFP) in supporting and accompanying national school feeding programmes.

15- We call for the intensification of cooperation between Arab countries in the field of school feeding, as well as the development of South-South cooperation and the cross fertilization and sharing of experiences, knowledge, lessons and best practices across countries in the region and globally, and observe the need to establish institutional mechanisms and a framework for organizing and ensuring the sustainability of these exchanges, with the support of regional and international organizations.

16- We congratulate Tunisia on its experience in school feeding, which stands out as a model for the region and internationally, and reflects a strong will to upgrade the quantity and quality of school feeding services, based upon effective partnerships between the government, civil society and communities; while striving to enhance governance and programme management, and to better adapt school meals to sub-national and local contexts. We encourage the continued sharing of Tunisian best practices and lessons learned with other countries in the region and beyond.

17- We express our gratitude to the Tunisian Republic for convening this dialogue on the strategic role of school feeding for education, inclusive development and stability in the Middle East and North Africa, and we welcome the level of discussion and proposals which have thereby resulted. We emphasize the need to continue consultations and joint action to meet the challenges facing our countries in the field of education, by developing strategies and plans to meet these challenges and improving the performance of our education systems.

Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education

Bridging continental and global education frameworks for the Africa We Want

Nairobi, April 2018

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Education of Africa, high-level government officials, representatives of the African Union (AU) and of the United Nations organizations, as well as Pan-African and sub-regional organizations, civil society, youth and teacher organizations, and international development partners, have gathered for the Pan-African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE2018) in Nairobi, Kenya, on 25-27 April 2018, setting out a harmonized vision for the educational transformation to meet our commitments to the **2063 Agenda for the Africa We Want** and the **global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. We thank the Government and people of the Republic of Kenya for their support and the Ministry of Education for hosting this important event.

2. We reaffirm our commitment to the 2015 Kigali Statement and to Sustainable Development Goal 4 **(SDG4)-Education 2030**, a centerpiece of the global Sustainable Development Agenda aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, as well as to the **Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)** aimed at reorienting Africa's education and training systems, Africa's response to and domestication of SDG4-Education 2030.

Building skilled African citizenry as agents of change

3. We commit to promoting **quality lifelong learning** for all at all levels, using diverse and relevant modes of learning with flexible pathways between formal, non-formal and informal education and training models, including strengthened systems of recognition and equivalence, to cater for all children, youth and adults in and out of school.

4. Recognizing that **access to and quality of education and training at all levels** remain critical challenges within the African continent with millions of children, young people and adults lacking foundational skills and relevant competencies needed for life and work in a globalized world, we commit to:

   a. Integrated approaches to **early childhood development, care and education policies**, programming and financing with an emphasis on holistic development including literacy and numeracy with particular attention to marginalized and vulnerable children,

with the commitment to progressively ensure at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education and with the active participation of families, communities and local governments.

b. Implementing and adequately resourcing diversified and appropriate learning policies and programmes, inclusive and gender-responsive curriculum, promoting multilingual education, sign languages and Braille, **to reach the unreached.**

c. Ensuring that education **sector planning effectively addresses out-of-school children, young people and adults who never enrolled in formal schooling or dropped out early, as well as all forms of exclusion**, including among others disabilities and albinism, and that data and indicator systems are adequately disaggregated and owned at continental, regional, national and local levels.

d. Promoting teaching and learning in the **mother tongue**, especially in early years of education; and developing policies to safeguard and raise the status, esteem and value of indigenous African languages.

e. Ensuring adequate recruitment and deployment, motivation and professional support of **teachers**, and to strengthening teacher training and professional development programmes at all levels including early childhood education and non-formal education; recognizing teachers as full-fledged professionals and agree on common qualification frameworks; and strengthening dialogue and partnership with teacher organizations.

f. Developing and strengthening regional and national **learning assessment systems** ensuring their effective use for informing policies and teaching and learning practices and outcomes; sharing good practices across regions; and increasing investments for regional assessments.

g. Making our **educational systems more responsive, flexible and resilient** to include refugees and internally displaced people, and increasing investment for Education in Emergencies and Crises.

h. Making the **learning and teaching environment** more healthy, inclusive and safe through adequate responses to school-related violence and discrimination based on gender, disability, origin, race, ethnicity, religion or any other factor.

5. We commit to achieving **gender equality** through

a. Rendering all aspects of the education system gender-sensitive, responsive, and transformative.

b. Implementing the Gender Equality Strategy of CESA 16-25.

c. Providing sexuality education in schools and tertiary institutions and ensuring access for adolescents and young people.

6. We recognize the importance of improving the relevance of education policies and practices **to strengthen skills and competencies for life and work**, and to foster resilient, sustainable, healthy and peaceful societies in an interconnected global world, and commit to:

a. Increasing equitable access to **quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training** (TVET) in all its forms, and recognizing that TVET should be crosscutting and encompass

continuous learning towards entrepreneurship, employability, capacity building, retraining and versatility.

b. Adapting programmes/curricula, qualifications and pathways offered and expanding labour market information systems to cover the **informal sector** and to better assess and anticipate changing skill needs, strengthening skills development to increase, reinforce and value the education and training in the informal economy, and further enhance Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

c. Increasing provision of **effective and relevant literacy programmes** for youth and adults leading to functional proficiency levels, integrating skills development for decent work and livelihood, health and responsible citizenship.

d. **Leveraging digital opportunities** by strengthening the development of digital skills and competencies at all levels through partnerships in support of ICT in education, including adoption of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Internet safety within curricula, and integrating ICTs into education policies, incorporating Open Educational Resources and assistive technology, and creating mobile and online education and training platforms providing equitable access to all learners regardless of their circumstances.

e. Improving the relevance of teaching and learning by integrating **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** in our education policies and practices at all levels and learning programmes, and ensuring critical youth engagement.

7. We recognize that the transformation of Africa requires strengthened efforts to move towards knowledge-based societies through the advancement of **higher education and research** in Africa with special focus on relevance and equitable access, strengthening of research, and teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). We commit to:

   a. **Ratifying the Addis Ababa Convention** and strengthening national quality assurance systems, and allocating necessary resources.

   b. Strengthening concerted, integrated, articulated and effective actions and partnerships to achieve the 2063 objectives for STEM, to develop and implement policies that **promote STEM** at all levels, especially among girls and women, and to develop STEM strategies for solving concrete problems such as food security, renewable energy, climate change, emergency response, epidemics, and calamities.

8. Recognizing the potential, strength and leadership of young people, we commit to the systemic **inclusion of youth and youth-led organizations** in continental, regional and national education decision-making, sector dialogue, and monitoring processes.

Building a conducive environment for education transformation in Africa

9. We recognize the importance of ownership of the CESA16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 at continental, regional and national levels, in congruence with wider development ambitions, and that their achievement requires more **integrated approaches to education policies and strategies** in a **lifelong learning** perspective, fostering truly **system-wide articulation and inter-sectorial collaboration.**

10. Recalling the commitment of governments to progressively allocate at least 4-6 percent of national Gross Domestic Product, and/or at least 15-20 percent of total public **expenditure for education**, in line with the principles of size, share, sensitivity, and scrutiny, we undertake to:

    a. Mobilise additional funds for education including innovative financing, national education funds, and consideration of the proposed Africa Education Fund.

    b. Advocate for tax reforms to increase public revenue and the share of public resources for education and related social services.

    c. Ensure more equitable allocation of education resources taking into account diversity, inclusion, and contingency funding for emergencies.

    d. Allocate targeted resources for recruitment and professional development of teachers and other education personnel.

    e. Improve efficiency, transparency and accountability (including among other measures optimizing teacher allocation, budget tracking, public expenditure reviews/national education accounts)

11. We commit to strengthening **National Assessment and Monitoring Mechanisms** for CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 targets and commitments and using the results of these assessments to improve the performance of education systems, to enhance equity, quality and relevance of educational outcomes at all levels, and to strengthen **public accountability, transparency and responsiveness**. We further commit to:

    a. Strengthening mechanisms, including EMIS, for data collection, analysis, dissemination and use at the national level and data reporting at the regional, continental and global levels for monitoring of progress toward CESA 16-25 and SDG4- Education 2030

    b. Expanding spaces for public participation including youth, teacher organizations, as well as media engagement in education dialogue and decision-making

    c. Further engaging with parliaments and parliamentarians at national, regional and the Pan-African Parliament levels to mobilise support for education

    d. Working with the AU/IPED and UNESCO/UIS/GEMR to produce a biennial report monitoring progress on achievement of CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 implementation at continental level

    e. Reviewing legislation on the right to education so that they meet the CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 commitments

12. We commit to improving and strengthening sector-wide and cross-sector coordination at continental, regional and national levels for lifelong learning through:
    a. Developing legal frameworks, policies and strategies

    b. Strengthening capacities to create and enhance delivery modalities to support flexible learning opportunities that are formally recognized, validated, and accredited

    c. Developing mechanisms and tools to operationalise national and regional qualification frameworks (NQF/RQF) for articulation across sub-sectors and mobility

Towards the Future

13. Recognising the importance of strengthening mechanisms for effective partnership and coordination at national, regional and continental levels and calling on international and regional organizations, in particular the AU, RECs, the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNESCO and SDG4 co-conveners, development banks and other multilateral and bilateral development partners, to work together to **ensure coherence and coordination** in support of national education development, we commit to:

    a. Establishing a joint **CESA - SDG4 Education 2030 mechanism**, to ensure coordinated consultation, joint action, capacity strengthening, review, monitoring and reporting on both the continental and global education commitments by extending CESA coordination structure to existing SDG4 regional coordination mechanisms.

    b. Promoting cross-national exchange and the dissemination of successful education policies and strategies, building on existing national and regional communication and knowledge-management platforms.

    c. Promoting education as a public good and in the public interest.

14. We commit to strengthening the global-regional nexus by ensuring that the voice of Africa is reflected in the deliberations of the global SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, the Technical Cooperation Group on Indicators, and contribution of inputs for the UN-led annual HLPF Review process.

15. We call for the strengthening of partnerships with and commitment of international development partners in supporting African education development around national priorities, including in low-income, fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and in promoting innovative approaches to education and training.

16. We agree to convene the Pan African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE) biennially to take stock of the progress made by Africa and support the implementation of CESA 16-25 and SDG4- Education 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want, and welcome the proposal of the Kingdom of Morocco to host the next PACE.

17. We adopt this Declaration and Call for Action, and agree to refer it to the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Education Science and Technology (STC-EST) for endorsement.

Regional Conference on Learning to live Sustainably in Cities in the Arab Region

Implementing Education for Sustainable Development in Learning Cities

5-7 March 2018

Aswan, Egypt

Action Plan and Way Forward

Regional Conference on Learning to live sustainably in Cities in the Arab Region

Aswan , Egypt (5-7) March 2018

Conference Report

I. Introduction

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is included in the Sustainable Development Goal on education SDG 4 (‘*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*’) under Target 4.7[1] and is a driver for the achievements of all other SDGs. ESD empowers everyone to make informed decisions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations. It intends to provide the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to achieve progress with regard to the different sustainable development challenges captured in the SDGs. ESD also helps understand the complex interdependence of the different SDGs.

Urban communities are critical drivers for sustainable development, and their efforts merit greater support. Cities themselves are the site of continuous exchanges of knowledge and information through which people’s thinking and understanding are transformed. Cities have an important role to play in ensuring that city-dwellers are educated for citizenship, engaged, and have the capacity and means to express themselves publicly and to exert an influence on their city.

Learning to live in a sustainable way and securing people’s involvement and participation in community and urban life are key factors in ensuring sustainable economic, social and environmental development. It is in this context that UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States – Beirut, UNESCO Regional Office – Cairo, UNESCO HQ – Paris, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) organized the regional conference for the Arab Region on the role of cities in accelerating sustainable solutions at local level through education.

[1] Target 4.7: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

63 experts and city representatives from the Arab region, participated in the regional conference in Aswan, Egypt, from 5 to 7 March 2018. The conference focused on supporting Arab States in implementing and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in cities and urban communities through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Learning Cities through:

- increasing awareness on existing tools and programmes on ESD, in particular on sustainable tourism, water and energy issues, Learning Cities, World Heritage Cities, Creative Cities, International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities and biosphere reserves;
- strengthening capacities of city authorities to integrate ESD at community level and build learning cities;
- fostering partnership and networking among cities through sharing of practices and policies in urban contexts that could be replicated;
- providing a platform for cities to engage in a multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary discussion on their role in promoting ESD and lifelong learning within the framework of the SDGs.
- facilitating activities to achieve the SDGs based on the concrete actions from the UNESCO GNLC member cities.

Action plan and way forward

Recommendations

The participants emphasized the pivotal role played by local administration in achieving the goals of sustainable development and building lifelong learning spaces. They recommend the followings:

1. Invite Arab cities to participate in the UNESCO Learning Cities Network as one of the important mechanisms for accelerating the achievement of sustainable development goals.

2. Invite Arab cities to take advantage of the Learning for Development program, which is based on knowledge and exchange of experiences.

3. Call upon the Arab cities to build networks of expert centers at the national and regional levels and benefit from the Japanese experience in this field.

4. To adopt systemic thinking in achieving the objectives of sustainable development through the adoption of integrated solutions to meet all the challenges of development as a result of the interlinkage between these challenges.

5. To review the administrative, legal, political and security challenges that affect the role of local authorities and their effectiveness in achieving sustainable development.

6. To build network between the national committees of UNESCO in the countries of the region to exchange experiences and maximize impact.

7. To pay greater attention to the establishment of databases at the local level to benefit from the development of local development plans and to serve the objectives of sustainable development.

8. To involve media institutions of all kinds in spreading the culture and concepts of lifelong learning and learning cities in order to accelerate the achievement of the goals of sustainable development.

9. The importance of networking among different Arab networks to preserve the environment, networks for literacy, adult education, lifelong learning, universities and specialized research centers to increase the effectiveness of various programs.

10. To emphasize the advanced concepts in the fight against poverty in the cities of learning through the shift from donation to capacity building and increase the possibilities of exchange of benefits "Exchange to Change."

11. Learning cities require high flexibility in learning spaces, domains, methods and methodologies with the basic need for mechanisms to recognize learning outcomes from outside formal education.

12. To emphasize the need for continuous, diversified activities in the learning cities to achieve the objectives associated with this concept and at the level of all areas and objectives of sustainable development.

13. To emphasize the importance of national dialogue as a tool to achieve peace and stability, to confront violence and extremism and to build cohesion among all elements, wings and strata of society, with the need to consider building learning domains to spread and inculcate universal human values.

14. To expand the concept of sustainability to include the preservation of heritage in all its forms.

Proposed Action Plan for Participating States, Organizations and Cities:

The participating countries, organizations, and individuals are committed to the following actions:

1. Building a network of contacts between the participants in the conference to spread the culture of lifelong learning and the role of learning cities in achieving the goals of sustainable.

2. UNESCO HQ is to actively implementing partnerships between different organizations and stakeholders in implementing sustainable development goals to develop cooperation and coordination among all of them.

3. The UNESCO Institute for Life Learning (UIL) implements the followings:

• Advocacy for twinning learning cities at the regional and global levels.

• Inviting active representatives from the region to participate in capacity building programs planned for the end of the year.

• Coordinating with the Arab Cities Organization on the integration of the learning component as one of the evaluation criteria in the activities of the Organization.

4. The Regional Office of UNESCO in Cairo shall implement the following:

• Collaborate with the city of Aswan to identify potential areas of action to support the development of tourism and cultural activities based on local resources, so as to achieve sustainable development and maximize returns for the local population.

5. Countries, cities, institutions and participants committed themselves to carry out activities and activities as follows:

Bahrain:

- Coordination with the relevent authorities to accelerate the participation of Bahraini cities in the network of learning cities.
- Seeking to establish a network of learning cities across the GCC.

Iraq:

- Making life-long learning central for spreading the culture of love and peace among the Iraqi people.
- Coordinate the establishment of educational, cultural, artistic and sports activities in cooperation among all stakeholders to spread the concepts of sustainable development and lifelong learning.

Jordan:

- Participating team is considered as the nucleus of a working team to connect with other municipalities to disseminate the concepts of learning cities and their applications for sustainable development.

- Provide training to partners and stakeholders on developing partnerships and building learning cities.

Lebanon:

- The National Commission for UNESCO will organizea national workshop on learning for sustainable living and disseminating the concept of sustainable development.
- Establish a national network of cities and sustainable areas to share experiences and knowledge, and establish a national award for the best sustainable city
- The municipalities of Baalbek and Saida will join the international network of learning cities and disseminate the concepts of learning cities to other municipalities

Morocco:

- Candidates from some of the Moroccan cities eligible to join the 'Learning Cities Network' (Rabat and Marrakech).
- The National Committee supports the UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASPnet).
- Encourage the exchange of successful projects in the field of sustainable development among the Arab countries.

Oman

- Utilize the GAP-ESD to develop national and local partnerships between educational institutions, business sectors and production to encourage students to engage in achieving the goals of sustainable development.
- Developing joint work projects between ASPnet schools and UNESCO clubs in universities within the framework of the "Learning Cities for Sustainable Living" themes and programs.
- Meeting representatives from different municipalities to promote the idea of learning cities.

Palestine:

- Networking with municipalities and various institutions to spread the culture of sustainable development and cities of learning.
- Twinning work with Arab cities that are members of the Learning Cities Network.
- Preparing and training specialized cadres in fields related to sustainable development.

Sudan:

- The team involved in networking between the relevant bodies and explaining the concept of sustainable development especially the fourth goal and its interrelated with the other objectives.
- Implementing workshops similar to workshops for this conference in all states of Sudan.
- Creating inter-state competitions to ensure that they adopt the thinking of learning cities.

Tunisia:

- Coordination and support for the other Tunisian cities to join the network of learning cities.
- Organizing various events that enhance the city's status as a learningcity.

Cairo Declaration

For

Rethinking Education: Towards a Common Global Good

The Future of Education in the Arab World

Under the auspices of the Presidential Specialized Council for Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Education in the Arab Republic of Egypt, and in the presence of Dr. Tarek Chawki, President of the Specialized Council, and His Excellency Minister of Education, Dr. Hilali Al Charbini, and in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Bureau of Education in Beirut and the UNESCO Regional Bureau of Sciences in Cairo, a regional seminar was held in Cairo on December 4 -5, 2016 on "Rethinking Education: Towards a Common Global Good", in the presence of --- participants representing 12 states, four regional and international organizations and the Arab League…

The participants studied the main seminar document prepared by UNESCO entitled "Rethinking Education: Towards a Common Global Good". They also studied and discussed the different papers presented in the seminar….

The participants are aware that we live in a society of knowledge where creativity and innovation are pre-conditions for living and co-existing. It is a society built on producing and freely circulating knowledge around; a society built on an economy of knowledge and a capital of knowledge where members of that society are the producers of knowledge. Thus, it is an obligation to promote an organized way of thinking, to build a cognitive track for the individual, to discover our children's innovative capacities during childhood, to move from a culture of dictation and memorization to a culture of creativity and innovation, to create a critical and innovative mindset in all fields of knowledge and art and to elevate their emotions and senses so they can appreciate, enjoy and be innovative in everything they do.

In a society where knowledge is intertwined with technology and where in most cases it is difficult to separate the two, it becomes necessary to rethink education for the future. An education for the future in the Arab world demands a quantum leap from teaching to learning, in other words shifting from the current "traditional pedagogies" found in the educational systems that are based on memorizing, remembering and dictating to "new pedagogies" based on developing 21st Century skills and competencies and improving the quality of education by focusing on six interconnected components:

Component 1: Shifting to 21st Century skills, "new pedagogies" and that is done by:

- Individualizing learning and teaching the individual how to learn and empowering him/her to build his/her own learning environment(s)

- Promoting participation by focusing on participatory learning skills by using ICT and social media.

Component 2: Continuous learner performance assessment; it is a comprehensive assessment that is linked to the learning process and is based on the performance and participation of the learner.

Component 3: Using ICT to transform the classical classroom into a modern classroom where the students look beyond the four walls of the room, realistically and virtually, into a wide space of knowledge to sail into the world of scientific and cultural progress.

Component 4: A flexible curriculum that provides the learner and the teacher with a wide space so that each identifies his/her educational needs (knowledge, information, values, competencies and skills needed in the 21st Century)

Component 5: Shifting to Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

Component 6: Lifelong learning and organizing the educational system in accordance with the international shift towards lifelong learning.

So that the abovementioned components be factors to achieve equal opportunities in the educational framework, we recommend the following:

The New Pedagogy

- Involving the business sector, organizations, civil society and syndicates to identify the competencies to be acquired by the students in all sectors
- Identifying the rules that organize the work of teachers and curricula preparation
- Training teachers on the needed new educational skills and strategies to move away from the traditional teaching methods and changing teacher mindset
- Identifying incentives that facilitate the shift from teaching to learning
- Developing the assessment systems at the national level to be in harmony with the skills and competencies of the new pedagogy
- Identifying gaps in educational needs in different geographic areas as well as stress exerted on different local communities
- Promoting the role of parents
- Providing resources that facilitate the shift to the new pedagogy

This is done through the following procedures:

- Developing reference guides on the new pedagogy
- Implementing awareness-raising activities on the new pedagogy
- Conducting field studies and research on the new pedagogy skills

- Capacity-building for teacher trainers on the new pedagogy
- Capacity-building for faculties of education members on the new pedagogy

This requires partnerships with the following stakeholders:

- Business sector – Non-governmental organizations – Civil society – teachers – parents – local communities – schools.
- Coordination and integration between organizations and regional centers to achieve the aforementioned

The new teacher roles

- Adopting a new teacher training model that takes into consideration the expected teacher roles and that leads to developing professional, scientific and educational capacities appropriately to enable the teachers to practice their needed roles
- Adopting licensing mechanisms to practice the profession and to continuously assess teacher performance in accordance with standards in harmony with the expected roles
- Writing programs to rehabilitate and train teachers on practicing the required roles
- Identifying a stakeholder in every state to lead the change process

This is done through the following procedures:

- Promoting the social and economic status of the teacher
- Promoting the role of teacher-training institutions to attract new students who want to enter the teaching profession
- Adopting incentives linked to expected good practices
- Networking between schools and teachers and sharing successful experiences

This requires partnerships with the following stakeholders:

- The teacher because he/she is a main partner in the change process
- Teacher-training and educational institutions that need to adopt joint approaches and provide harmony between professional training and practice in schools
- The school and the local community and encouraging community service activities and voluntary work
- Training institutions and social media

Values and Standards of citizenship education

Values and standards of citizenship education are developed through the following steps:

- Liberating the concept of citizenship education and socially and educationally agreeing on it
- Including the concept of citizenship education in educational policies, curricula and programs
- Promoting the capacity of the school and university to teach shared human values and citizenship education
- Finding an educational and training support system for teachers and educational staff
- Making available citizenship education processes, procedures and outputs assessment indicators and methods
- Encouraging working with partners in a democratic way
- Preparing the public domain to support citizenship education
- Finding tracks between local citizenship education and global citizenship education
- Focusing on economic, social and environmental sustainability concepts

This is done through the following procedures:

- Writing a joint working system to promote dialogue, tolerance and joint work
- Studying and adopting local and international models of citizenship like the summer semester model for citizenship skills training and considering them a part of the educational curriculum
- Promoting dialogue programs and training on them
- Training teachers and school staff on planning citizenship education programs and implementing the activities inside and outside of schools
- Preparing guides on citizenship and global citizenship for teachers and individuals who prepare the curricula and write the school books
- Focusing on environmental, economic and social sustainability and linking it with modern international scientific orientations
- Promoting the culture of dialogue and acceptance of the other, respecting cultural diversity and appreciating the different human civilization contributions
- Training authors of children's books and child animators on integrating ICT in child education

This requires partnerships with the following stakeholders:

- Cultural and educational institutions and the media
- Civil Society Organizations
- Political parties
- Professional Syndicates

The role of UNESCO

- Presenting successful practices in critical thinking and citizenship education
- Establishing a volunteer think tank where the first thing to be done is having the group of participants in this workshop come up with ideas for implementation activities as a follow-up for the Cairo meeting
- Developing, in cooperation with active regional organizations and centers, working papers for educational policies in domains and components mentioned in the UNESCO pamphlet, especially those that are appropriate for teaching in the Arab region
- Writing guidelines for policies and capacity-building on the new pedagogy and citizenship education
- Building communication networks around the new pedagogy in order to develop 21st Century skills, respecting cultural diversity and acknowledging the importance of citizenship

Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative
Middle East and North Africa

LSCE

Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa

A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills

Conceptual and Programmatic Framework
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The following organizations contributed to the development of the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework:

AFLATOUN INTERNATIONAL
Arab Institute for Human Rights
BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY
Deutsche Post DHL Group
ILO
international youth foundation
MERCY CORPS
NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL
Save the Children
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency
unrwa الاونروا
WORLD BANK GROUP
EDUCATION FOR COMPETITIVENESS E4C
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CONTENTS

1. The case for life skills and citizenship education in MENA 1

2. The LSCE Initiative as a conceptual and programmatic collaborative endeavour of country, regional and global partners 2

3. Towards a conceptual understanding of life skills and citizenship education 2

4. The Conceptual Framework 4

4.1. The four Dimensions of Learning: a transformative vision of education for the 21st century 5

4.2. The twelve core life skills for MENA 6

4.3. The twelve core life skills and subject areas 6

5. The Programmatic Framework 8

5.1. The pedagogical strategies supporting the acquisition of the twelve core life skills 9

5.2. A multiple pathways approach: channels and modalities of delivery 10

5.3. A systems approach 10

6. Travelling the road: the operationalization of the twelve core life skills at the country level 11

7. Navigating the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework 13

Executive Summary

1. The case for life skills and citizenship education in MENA

Children, youth and all learners in the Middle East and North Africa face **unprecedented challenges** in terms of learning, employment and social cohesion, aggravated by a context of political instability and conflicts. The general consensus is that education systems are broadly failing to deliver the outcomes needed to advance individual and social development, and that the increasing number of education opportunities in the region has yet to translate into economic growth.

Globally, a growing body of evidence suggests that successful performance in school, work and life needs to be supported by a wide range of skills and values, the development of which should be fostered by education systems. Ongoing **education reforms in MENA** have certainly led to positive achievements in the past 15 years, such as improving the access to formal basic education and closing the gender gap. However, there is a skills deficit in the region that is yet to be addressed in a qualitative, concerted and systemic way, and a comprehensive education reform in this regard remains a 'road not taken'.

Constrained by traditional classroom teaching, learning techniques and examination practices, children and youth in MENA generally do not receive an education that is aligned with contemporary realities and labour market requirements. A far-reaching consequence is that they typically **lack the skills** to be successful at school and at work, and to become positive and active members of society. In addition, fragile learning environments exist where education has been increasingly used as an element of radicalization, by which the propagation of extreme belief systems taints children's and youth's educational experiences. This situation calls for a holistic and transformative vision of education that maximizes the potential of all children and better equips them with life skills to face the transitions from childhood to adulthood, from education to work, and from unreflective development to responsible and active citizenship.

The MENA **Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) Initiative** represents a country and regional collaborative endeavour towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It seeks to reformulate traditional understandings of life skills and citizenship education in the region, while recalling fundamental questions about the purpose and role of education in societal development that are relevant to the current context.

The LSCE Initiative focuses on three **inter-locking challenges:**

- An elusive knowledge society, as a result of poor quality of education, low levels of learning outcomes, and limited equity and inclusion.
- Declining economic growth, as a result of a lack of employability skills, high youth unemployment rates, gender disparities in accessing the labour market, lack of job creation, and a weak business environment.
- Weak social cohesion, as a result of mounting violence and radicalization as well as weak civic engagement.

The **theory of change** for the MENA LSCE Initiative is driven by the compelling need to achieve tangible impact in these three inter-related areas where life skills and citizenship education can make a difference: the achievement of a knowledge society through improved education outcomes; the realization of economic development through improved employment and entrepreneurship; and the attainment of enhanced social cohesion through improved civic engagement.

At the heart of the LSCE Initiative is the proposition of a **rights-based and transformative vision** of education that fosters successful individuals in the context of the workplace while fulfilling education's role to enhance academic and personal development as well as social cohesion.

2. The LSCE Initiative as a conceptual and programmatic collaborative endeavour of country, regional and global partners

The LSCE Initiative seeks to provide diverse stakeholders in MENA with an evidence-based framework for action towards the achievement of the above three inter-connected outcomes. It has two main components: (i) the development of a **Conceptual and Programmatic Framework (CPF)** on life skills and citizenship education that serves as a guide to strategy development and programming at the country level, and (ii) the organization of technical support to countries on planning and implementation.

An Analytical Mapping (AM) has been developed to provide the evidence for the CPF, including an overview of the status of life skills and citizenship education in MENA, and an indepth analysis of major initiatives and programmes at regional and national levels.

The LSCE Initiative **brings together** the active contribution of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), along with ministries of education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries.

The United Nations agencies **partnering in the Initiative** include: The International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP). NGOs and academic institutions include: Aflatoun International, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), Birzeit University (BZU), the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and Save the Children. The Deutsche Post DHL is part of the Initiative as a representative of the private sector.

The LSCE Initiative was launched at the 2015 UNICEF MENA Education Network (MEdNet) Meeting, where country delegations endorsed the Initiative and expressed their intention to take the work on life skills and citizenship education forward at the country level. The **development of the CPF** advanced through multiple country and regional consultations, and technical meetings, earning the engagement of more than 600 stakeholders at national, regional and global levels, including representatives from government institutions (ministries of education, youth, social affairs and labour), regional and global organizations, United Nations agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and experts, the private sector, and children and youth.

3. Towards a conceptual understanding of life skills and citizenship education

The LSCE Initiative revisits the concept of life skills and citizenship education in MENA, while providing a roadmap that is relevant to the regional 21st century context. The development of the CPF has included an extensive mapping and review of national, regional and global definitions that reveal a lack of consensus on what should define and constitute the skills of the 21st century. Overall, the **lack of clear definitions is coupled with conceptual confusion** between 'competencies', 'skills' and 'life skills', and in many instances the terms are used interchangeably. Typically, the term 'competency' is used within the specific technical domain of curriculum development. In other cases, diverse and broad definitions of skills and life skills are adopted as part of ad hoc and dispersed social initiatives undertaken by the United Nations or international NGOs within the non-formal sphere. While the term 'skill' is mostly used to mean technical vocational abilities, the term 'life skills' often refers to the softer forms of skills related to daily life and civic engagement. Finally, in many cases, the discourse and practice on competencies, skills and life skills is not accompanied by rights-based values that are so much needed to address the challenges of the 21st century.

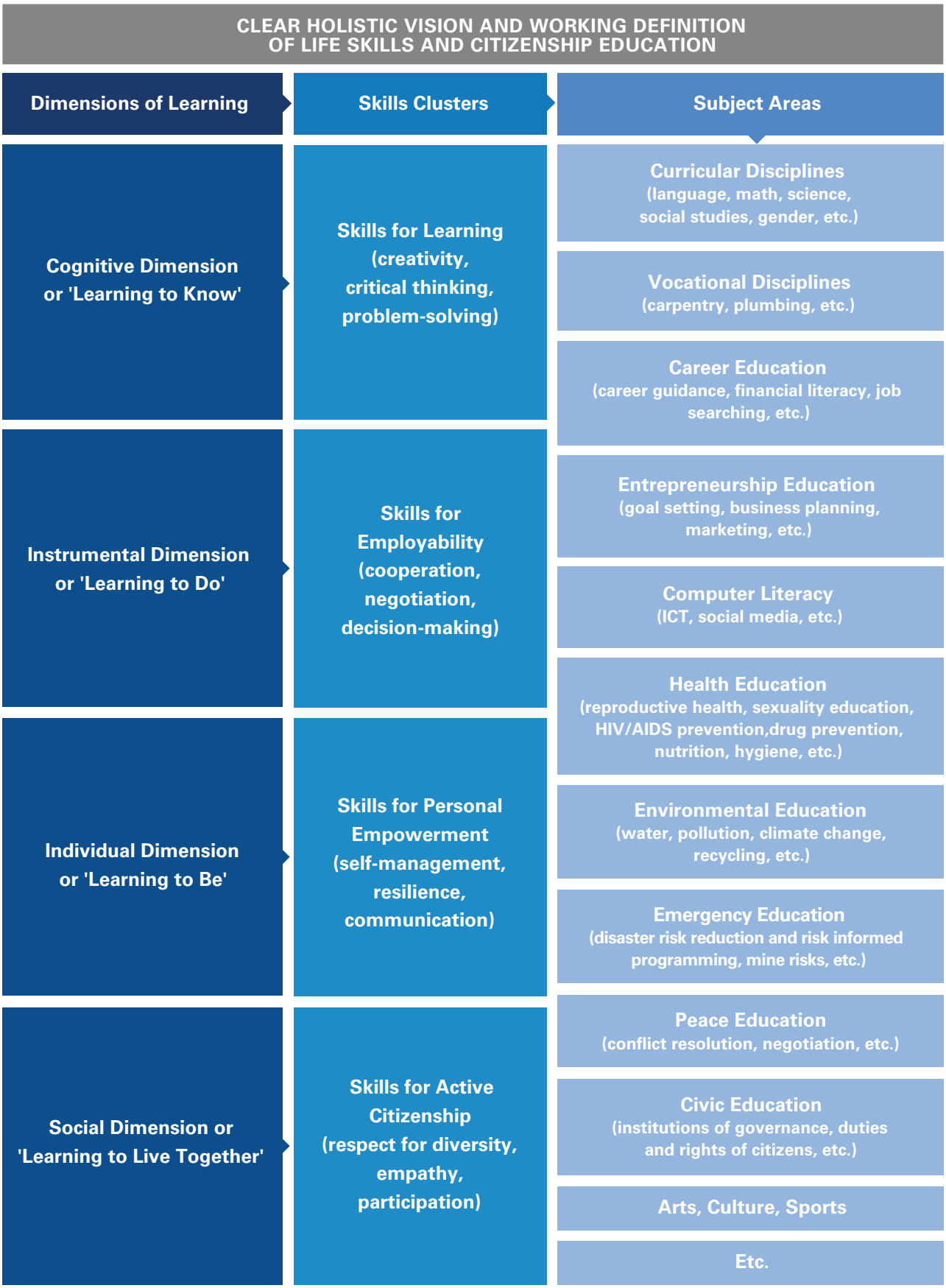
Within this context, a revised, holistic and clearer definition of the term 'life skills and citizenship education' is proposed, addressing both the existing conceptual and programmatic gaps through **four essential premises:**

- **A holistic approach to education**: The vision is underpinned by a holistic approach to education, considering the whole learner by acknowledging the multi-dimensionality of education, which plays not only into the cognitive, but also the individual and social realms, especially with regard to personal development, social cohesion and sustainable development. Quality education, within this framework, is envisioned as fostering empowered individuals who can learn effectively and fulfil their social responsibilities while also being successful in the context of the workplace.

- **A humanistic and rights-based approach:** In relation to the above, quality education is not value-neutral and must have a transformative effect. Quality education needs to be sustained by a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education fosters human dignity, before economic performance, and promotes human rights-based values.
- **A lifelong learning cycle:** Life skills acquisition is understood as a cumulative investment from an early age, not only for adolescents and for adults. It builds on the assumption that, at every age, every individual is a learner in the context of a society that offers multiple opportunities throughout life to learn and fulfil personal potential, thus going beyond the traditional distinctions between initial and continuing education.
- **A multiple pathways and systems approach:** Quality education can be effective in fostering learning and individual empowerment, and creating an environment that enables social inter-connectedness. If life skills and citizenship education is furthered through multiple learning pathways, from formal education to informal settings to the workplace, it can reach all individuals. In turn, quality learning through life skills and citizenship education can be sustained only if it is mainstreamed in educational systems.

The following two sections provide an overview of the conceptual and programmatic components of the CPF.

4. The Conceptual Framework



4.1 The four Dimensions of Learning: a transformative vision of education for the 21st century

The CPF proposes a conceptual and definitional understanding of 21st-century skills based on **a four-dimensional model of learning**. This model consolidates and broadens the lifelong learning paradigm developed in the 1996 Delors report titled *Learning: The Treasure Within,* taking into consideration the subsequent developments in education and society. The CPF repositions the Delors report pillars of education as Dimensions of Learning to emphasize their dynamic nature.

The following four Dimensions of Learning underpin the working definition of life skills and citizenship education in the CPF:

- **'Learning to Know' or the Cognitive Dimension:** This Dimension includes the development of abilities involving concentration, problem-solving and critical thinking, as well as emphasizes curiosity and creativity as the desire to gain a better understanding of the world and other people. The concept of **'Learning to Know'** has become increasingly prominent, since it further underpins the acquisition of fundamental basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and Information Communications Technology (ICT) skills. The Cognitive Dimension of Learning is therefore necessary to develop new skills and to ensure acquisition of new knowledge.
- **'Learning to Do' or the Instrumental Dimension:** This Dimension considers how children and youth can be supported to put what they have learned into practice and how education can be adapted to better serve the world of work. This is anticipated in Bloom's 1956 *Taxonomy of Learning Domains* with the concept of application, i.e., putting theoretical learning into practice in everyday contexts. Learning for the fast-changing world of work should respond to the evolving demands of the labour market, new technologies and the needs of young people as they make the transition from education to work.
- **'Learning to Be' or the Individual Dimension:** This Dimension entails learning as self-fulfilment, personal growth and supportive of self-empowerment and includes cognitive, intra-personal and interpersonal skills. Personal growth encompasses both personal and social factors. Skills developed under this Dimension are important for self-protection, violence prevention and resilience, as such they should be considered as enablers for other Dimensions of Learning.
- **'Learning to Live Together' or the Social Dimension:** This is the ethical Dimension that underpins the vision for citizenship education in MENA. It adopts a human rights-based approach consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles, and it constitutes the ethical foundation of the three other Dimensions of Learning (Cognitive, Instrumental and Individual). Equally important, citizenship education aims to be relevant in MENA by engaging with the most poignant challenges facing the region.

These four Dimensions of Learning should not be considered as distinct and mutually exclusive; the reality is much more dynamic. The four Dimensions of Learning **overlap, inter-connect and reinforce one another** to combine in the individual learner. As such they offer a framework for looking at life skills in relation to different purposes of learning, and that constitute a practical tool for informing the selection of skills that are relevant for quality learning. It should be noted that many life skills can be applied simultaneously in all four Dimensions of Learning. The selection of skills for each Dimension includes a necessary judgement about their relative importance for the particular Dimension.

4.2 The twelve core life skills for MENA

Life skills are defined within the CPF as cognitive and non-cognitive, higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills for learning, for employability, for personal empowerment, and for active citizenship. Citizenship education is an inseparable component of life skills education that emphasizes the need for social transformation and refers to the capabilities and energies that can foster open societies, harness the enthusiasm and motivation of younger generations, and provide them with the tools to build a better future for their communities and the region.

A set of **12 core life skills for MENA** has been identified using the four-dimensional model. They are: creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, negotiation, decision-making, self-management, resilience, communication, respect for diversity, empathy and participation (see figure on the next page).

The **identification and selection of the core life skills** was informed by an extensive literature review, and by regional and national consultations conducted as part of the LSCE Initiative. Identification and selection was achieved through a threefold process. First, it included a comprehensive analytical listing of a 'cluster of skills' under each of the four Dimensions of Learning, guided by the key socio-economic issues to be addressed: enhancing quality education and learning outcomes, enhancing employability and entrepreneurship, and enhancing individual empowerment and civic engagement. Second, for each of the four Dimensions, a set of three skills was identified based on their relative importance and implication for the particular Dimension, and on their inclusion of several other skills (or sub-skills). Third, an indepth analysis was conducted for each of the 12 core life skills, highlighting, through evidence, their objectives, their particular contribution to their related Dimension, as well as their contribution to the other three Dimensions of Learning. Each of the 12 core life skills, therefore, when analysed and applied from this perspective, provide learners with a solid comprehensive approach to learning that is value-based.

Indeed, it is important to note that the **12 identified core life skills are not value-neutral**. They reflect a holistic and transformative vision for quality education based on a strong ethical foundation, which recognizes that education needs to foster human dignity and promote human rights-based values. Unlike existing frameworks at use, the focus of the 12 core life skills for MENA does not solely aim to gear education towards the achievement of successful individual performance in the context of the workplace and does not consider education primarily as an economic activity geared to maximize growth and productivity. Equally important, the 12 core life skills are featured within an approach to **'rethink education'** in a way that fulfils its role in enhancing social cohesion; they are aligned with relevant citizenship and humanitarian frameworks conceived to care for and respect other human beings, as well as to minimize or prevent the use of violence.

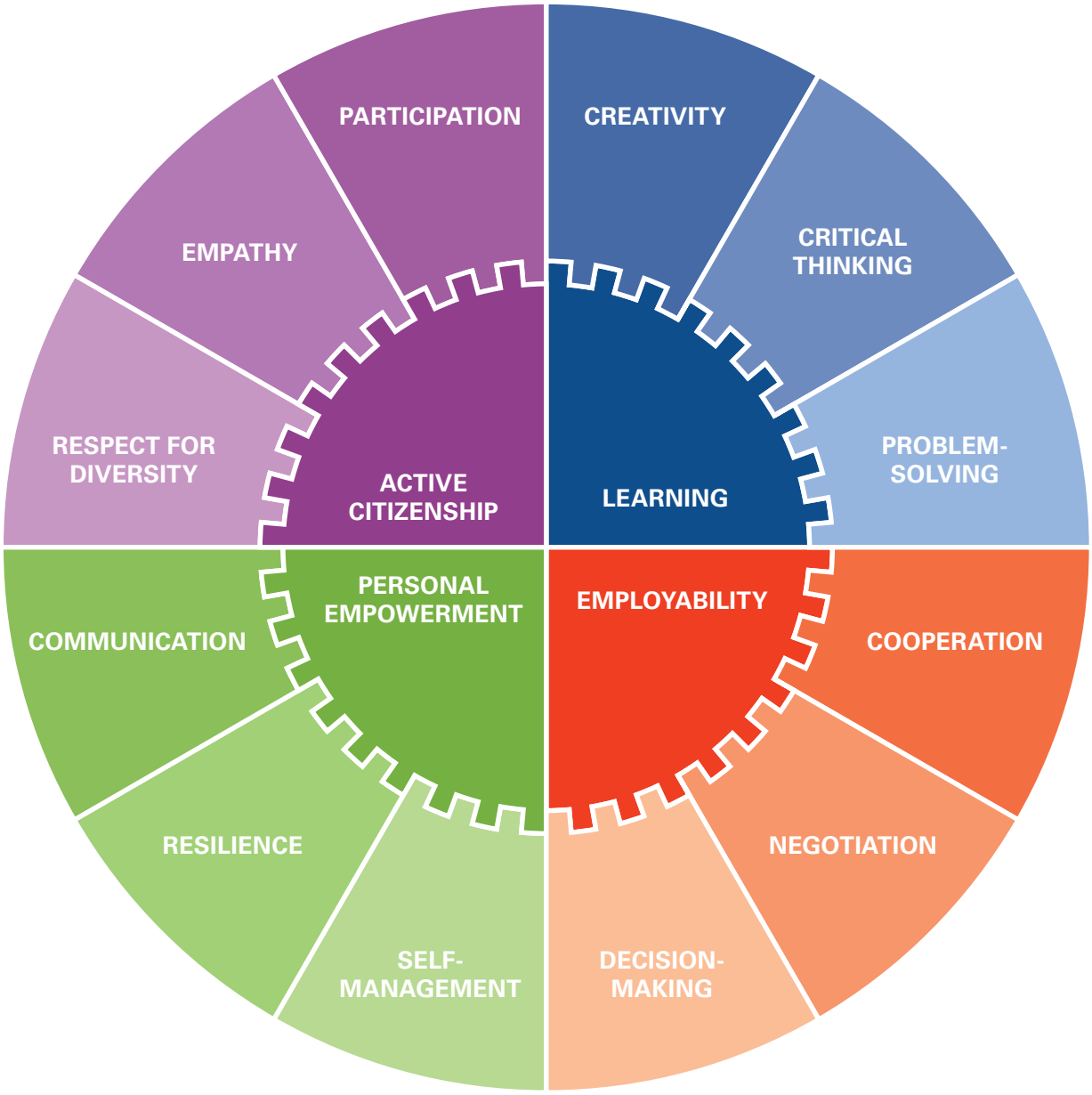
The **12 core life skills are lifelong** and they build on evidence that underlines the importance of skills acquisition from an early age, addressing the 'bias' that exists in the education community of linking skills acquisition only to the adolescent and youth ages. The importance of the cumulative investment in skill acquisition is recognized in the CPF. Furthermore, the 12 core life skills are acquired and sustained through all forms of learning in a systems approach that recognizes multiple pathways of learning, formal, non-formal and informal.

4.3 The twelve core life skills and subject areas

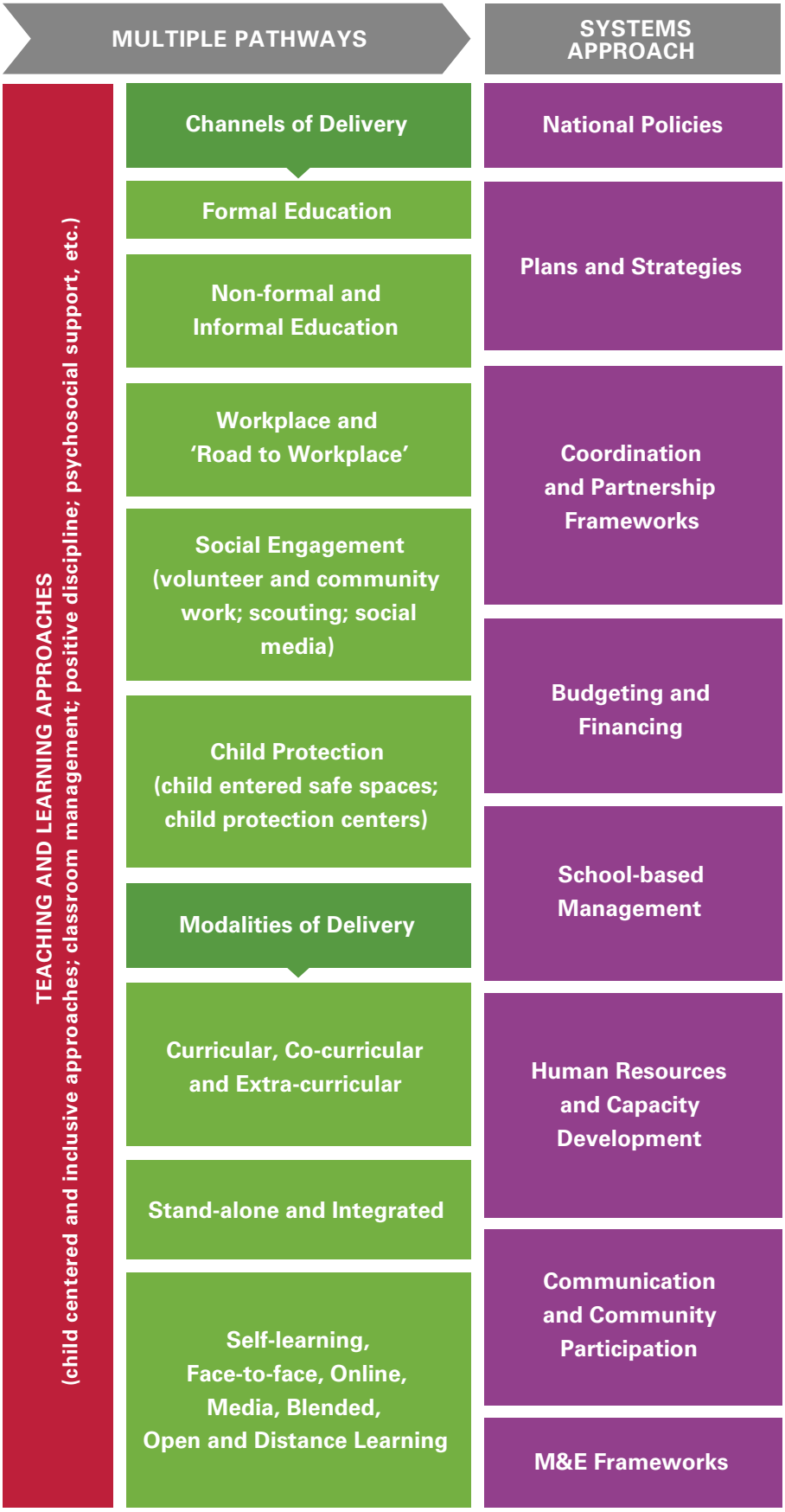
The CPF provides examples that clarify the difference between skills and relevant subject areas. It also defines key opportunities where learning could be improved through a focus on the 12 core life skills. **Subject areas** should be understood as thematic, technical, academic or knowledge subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be integrated. They include curricular and vocational disciplines, career and entrepreneurship education, computer literacy, health and environmental education, emergency education, civic education, arts, culture and sports, etc. Subject areas are often confused with life skills. However, they need to be seen as areas to be underpinned by life skills and citizenship education in order to support the acquisition of the core life skills.

For example, **curricular disciplines** refer to the main subjects of national curricula, such as language, mathematics and science, social studies, etc. A life skills and citizenship education approach is relevant to all of these, and a key issue is to ensure consistency across the curriculum. It is likely to be an ineffective strategy to only focus on the core life skills in one subject among many in the curriculum without ensuring a coherent and comprehensive approach.

Vocational disciplines are also key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be embedded in order to increase access to these disciplines and enhance their relevance. Good quality demand-driven Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (based on life skills and citizenship education) is potentially one of the most important pathways for providing young people with skills, and enhancing employability. In addition, career and entrepreneurship education within the framework of employability programmes in MENA represent key subject areas where life skills and citizenship education need to be embedded. Beyond the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship, children and youth need to be supported in the development of core life skills to ensure that they can effectively achieve the objectives of these programmes.



5. The Programmatic Framework



5.1 The pedagogical strategies supporting the acquisition of the twelve core life skills

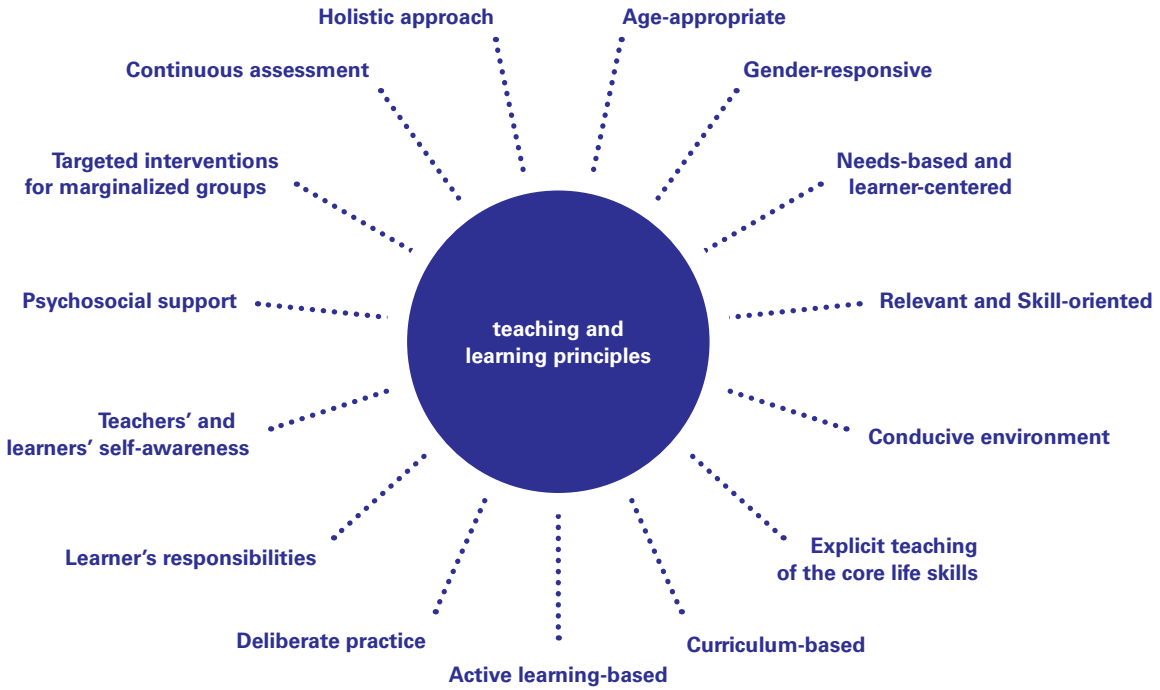
Teaching and learning approaches are positioned at the intersection between concept and programming. This is in recognition of the pivotal role of **effective pedagogy** and the high importance of skilled and motivated teachers and facilitators to ensure quality learning. The CPF highlights the pedagogical strategies needed to foster the acquisition of the 12 core life skills. These include socio-emotional learning (SEL), child-centred methodologies, activity-based learning, positive discipline and psychosocial support, among others.

The experience of successful education reforms indicates that equipping and supporting teachers to practice **active learning methods** can bring about significant change in learning outcomes and best supports life skills and citizenship education. It involves a learner-centred approach in which the process of teaching and learning is highly important; so much so that it can be considered more process-centred than product-centred. Participatory teaching and learning approaches are important in all aspects of life skills and citizenship education, where the rationale is to engage children and youth in the learning process and enable them to personalize knowledge and apply it to their own lives. Children and youth need to become reflective, self-aware learners, conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, and capable of setting their own learning goals.

Creating a **safe learning environment** in which all learners can participate is fundamental to effective life skills and citizenship education. This means that learners are physically protected, socially and emotionally safe, and all are treated equitably, respectfully and fairly. The classroom climate should be positive and free from fear. Discipline should be positive and not punitive (which is counter-productive to the ethos of life skills and citizenship education).

Teachers and facilitators have a critical role in putting active learning into practice. The teacher, in an active classroom environment, is an enabler, facilitating learning rather than transmitting knowledge to the learner. Instead of focusing on asking questions, the teacher needs to encourage learners to ask questions themselves and to play a role in their own learning. The role of the teacher is often that of a facilitator, supporting learners as they learn and develop skills. In this approach, it is important that the teacher has a full understanding on the methods that enable the learner to learn effectively.

The figure below illustrates the **main teaching and learning principles** that contribute to the operationalization of the 12 core life skills.



5.2 A multiple pathways approach: channels and modalities of delivery

A **multiple pathways approach** is essential for mainstreaming life skills and citizenship education and recognizes that life skills need to be developed along several and different educational pathways, from pre-primary to post-basic education, including formal and non-formal education, on the road to and in the workplace, through social engagement and child protection. It also acknowledges the different modalities through which life skills and citizenship education can be delivered, such as traditional face-to-face instruction and more innovative blended learning. A multiple pathways approach meets the increasing complexity of the knowledge-based economy and the rapid changes taking place in society more generally. It acknowledges that learning can take place at different times and in different settings. The same qualifications can be attained by following different learning pathways with different providers.

A multiple pathways approach has further **benefits**. It maximizes participation and safeguards equity and inclusiveness through targeting of marginalized populations. It is also needed to ensure coherence in interventions and messages within different environments where children and youth learn.

In addition to the various channels, there are multiple delivery modalities available for programming. These include curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular approaches. The CPF highlights several **curricular options** used to mainstream life skill and citizenship education in national curricula. In MENA, the common approach has been to introduce life skills and citizenship education as a stand-alone subject in the curriculum. This has often been a result of different initiatives that have variously supported HIV education, school health and nutrition, and education for sustainable development. However, life skills and citizenship education should ideally be progressively integrated across the curriculum in all subjects, within the framework of curriculum reforms. In Tunisia, the 12 core life skills are being integrated as part of the national curriculum reform, representing a unique and visionary example for their operationalization through the curricular modality.

Along with the curricular modality, life skills and citizenship education is often implemented through **co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions**. In MENA, the main focus is on extra-curricular approaches, as confirmed by the findings of the AM. On the other hand, promising practices highlight the importance of accompanying the curricula with co-curricular interventions. An example is the 'learning objects' approach, which has been piloted and evaluated by the Center for Continuing Education at Birzeit University in the State of Palestine and is aligned with the requirements of the Palestinian curriculum. Consideration of what is the best modality to adopt has been part of the discourse of the LSCE Initiative. The CPF advocates for the optimal combination of these modalities for effective teaching and learning of the 12 core life skills.

5.3 A systems approach

The findings of the AM show that life skills and citizenship education is poorly integrated in existing national policies, strategies and plans, with limited national assessments and weak participatory involvement of different stakeholders. This is coupled with a lack of effective national coordination frameworks representing the different stakeholders involved in life skills and citizenship education. Programmes in MENA have limited scalability and coordination among relevant governmental organizations, and the private sector is weak. Overall, they remain sporadic, unsupervised and face sustainability risks. In addition, there are limited regulatory frameworks linking formal and non-formal education with limited or no recognition or accreditation of alternative learning opportunities.

The CPF proposes a **systems approach** to programming for life skills and citizenship education, anchored to national education systems. A systems approach is required to achieve critical mass; national impact cannot be realized through the implementation of unconnected small-scale interventions at the margins of the education system. The systems approach to programming for life skills and citizenship education also warrants an equity focus because it can invest data, analysis and monitoring in tracking and targeting as means to maximize the impact of learning opportunities available to children and youth.

The mainstreaming of life skills and citizenship education within national education systems requires coordinated programmatic interventions that look at the totality of system components. To ensure national coverage, quality of learning processes and outcomes, as well as financial sustainability, it is necessary for countries to have **national policies, strategies and plans with budgets** to support the implementation of life skills and citizenship education.

Coordination and partnership frameworks between the ministries of education and other ministries, NGOs and the private sector – as part of a systems approach – are also key to ensuring coherent

approaches and efficient use of resources (human and financial). This calls for the identification of complementary and supportive roles within a coherent framework, together with regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality delivery as well as accreditation and certification.

Schools play a critical role in ensuring the realization of life skills and citizenship education. A systems approach recognizes that schools need to be supported within the framework of clear national policy mandates and the provision of necessary resources for them to build a conducive school ethos that fosters learning. In particular, schools need to have control over their interventions, as well as the tools for performing their own monitoring.

Human resources are the fundamental basis of effective life skills and citizenship education programming. These include not only teachers, but also head-teachers and all education personnel involved in supporting teaching and learning processes, whether in formal, non-formal or informal education settings. Specific attention should be given to the role of school counsellors as an important resource for skills development.

An **enabling environment**, political will, commitment and cooperation among partners, and a shared vision are the assumptions that underpin the theory of change for the LSCE Initiative. In particular, parental and community mobilization are essential for creating and sustaining a conducive environment for life skills and citizenship education. In this context, the development of coherent Communication for Development (C4D) strategies reflect the need for a multi-pronged approach that addresses further communication with care-givers, children and youth.

6. Travelling the road: the operationalization of the twelve core life skills at the country level

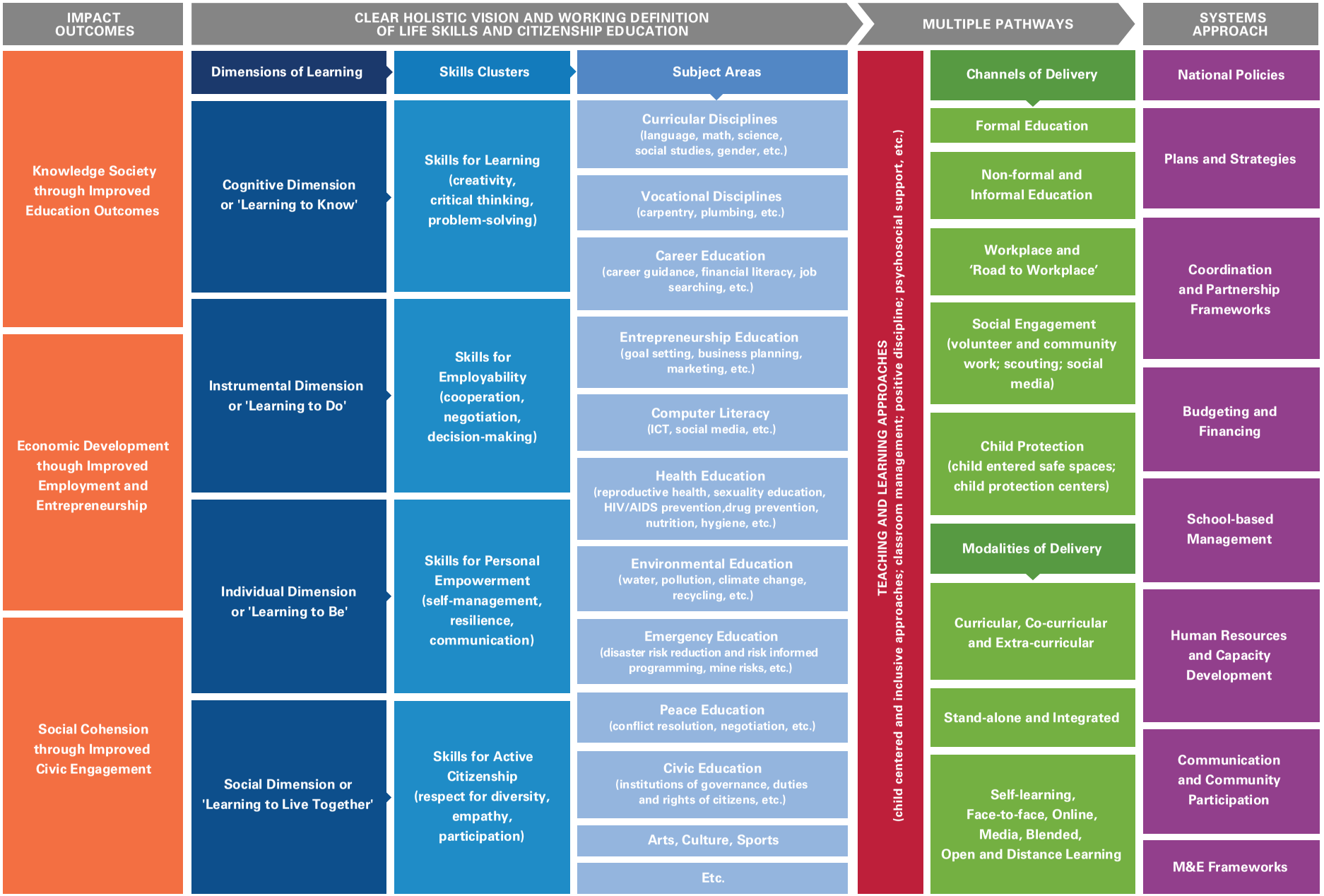
Achieving the vision set forth in the CPF requires a strategic approach towards the reforms needed to strengthen and mainstream life skills and citizenship education within and around education systems. This calls for the adoption of a **'strategic incrementalism'** that aims at maximizing the opportunities available for programming. Through the multiple pathways and systems approach the CPF further identifies the key entry points that can become pressure points to achieve scale, sustainability and long-term change within national education systems.

In this regard, the **strong commitment, leadership and engagement of ministries of education** are of paramount importance in fostering substantial change in the education system, and beyond, to achieve quality and regulation of interventions, scale, sustainability and impact on learning, employability and social cohesion. Other ministries (for example ministries of youth) and other stakeholders (such as NGOs) engaged in life skills and citizenship education would need to be brought together within frameworks of collaboration, to ensure quality, sustainability and impact.

The operationalization of the 12 core life skills, identified as part of the LSCE Initiative, will be further supported through the development of an evidence-based assessment methodology and tools to **measure the 12 core life skills**. The methodology will offer a standardized approach to be adapted for localized interventions both in formal and non-formal settings across the region.

The CPF is an evolving regional framework to be tested and refined at the national level. The main recommendations of the CPF define a way forward for life skills and citizenship education programming in MENA that includes short, medium and long-term perspectives. **Technical support** will be provided to countries in terms of upstream engagement towards multi-sectoral collaboration, policy and strategy development, integration of life skills and citizenship education in national curricula, as well as programmatic interventions including the piloting of co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions within the multiple pathways and systems approach.

Functioning as a roadmap for the region, the CPF is a comprehensive framework that combines **three main building blocks**: (i) a holistic vision and working definition of life skills and citizenship education; (ii) a multiple pathways approach through which life skills and citizenship education can be implemented; and (iii) a systems approach to anchor interventions within national education systems. The figure on the next page provides the complete visual representation of the CPF that defines the impact and outcomes that it aims to achieve, while unpacking the main components already described within each building block.


IMPACT OUTCOMES
CLEAR HOLISTIC VISION AND WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION
MULTIPLE PATHWAYS
SYSTEMS APPROACH
Knowledge Society through Improved Education Outcomes
Economic Development though Improved Employment and Entrepreneurship
Social Cohension through Improved Civic Engagement
Dimensions of Learning
Skills Clusters
Subject Areas
Cognitive Dimension or 'Learning to Know'
Instrumental Dimension or 'Learning to Do'
Individual Dimension or 'Learning to Be'
Social Dimension or 'Learning to Live Together'
Skills for Learning (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving)
Skills for Employability (cooperation, negotiation, decision-making)
Skills for Personal Empowerment (self-management, resilience, communication)
Skills for Active Citizenship (respect for diversity, empathy, participation)
Curricular Disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, gender, etc.)
Vocational Disciplines (carpentry, plumbing, etc.)
Career Education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching, etc.)
Entrepreneurship Education (goal setting, business planning, marketing, etc.)
Computer Literacy (ICT, social media, etc.)
Health Education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention,drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene, etc.)
Environmental Education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling, etc.)
Emergency Education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks, etc.)
Peace Education (conflict resolution, negotiation, etc.)
Civic Education (institutions of governance, duties and rights of citizens, etc.)
Arts, Culture, Sports
Etc.
TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES (child centered and inclusive approaches; classroom management; positive discipline; psychosocial support, etc.)
Channels of Delivery
Formal Education
Non-formal and Informal Education
Workplace and 'Road to Workplace'
Social Engagement (volunteer and community work; scouting; social media)
Child Protection (child entered safe spaces; child protection centers)
Modalities of Delivery
Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular
Stand-alone and Integrated
Self-learning, Face-to-face, Online, Media, Blended, Open and Distance Learning
National Policies
Plans and Strategies
Coordination and Partnership Frameworks
Budgeting and Financing
School-based Management
Human Resources and Capacity Development
Communication and Community Participation
M&E Frameworks

7. Navigating the Conceptual and Programmatic Framework

The CPF is structured in the following four chapters:

1. A transformative vision of education for the 21st century: This chapter outlines first the challenges that the LSCE CPF seeks to address through the proposed rights-based and holistic vision of education. It then unpacks the conceptual field around life skills and citizenship education, and provides a renewed understanding that builds on the strengths and resolves weaknesses of existing frameworks. Finally, the chapter presents the contours of the proposed LSCE CPF based on conceptual and programmatic building blocks as well as a higher-order theory of change.

2. The Conceptual Framework: This chapter analyses first the holistic vision of the four Dimensions of Learning. It then unpacks each Dimension through the identification of related life skills. It further presents the selected 12 core life skills in detail together with their relevance to each of the four Dimensions of Learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the subject areas through which life skills and citizenship education are realized.

3. The Programmatic Framework: This chapter outlines first the necessary teaching and learning approaches for life skills and citizenship education. It then unpacks the diverse channels and modalities for delivering life skills and citizenship education. It also analyses the key components of a systems approach and the final section proposes a three-pronged monitoring and evaluation strategy.

4. Travelling the road: This section proposes steps for translating the CPF into action and operationalization at the country level. It advocates particularly for strategic incrementalism as an approach to ensure sustainable, scalable, system-wide and lifelong interventions, recognizing especially the leadership of ministries of education.

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GCED Network Meeting in the Arab Region

Luxor 2017

OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

The Network Meeting welcomed over 50 representatives from GCED-implementing national and regional institutions in the Arab Region, Civil Society Organizations, Ministries of Education, Teacher Training Institutes, Academia & Universities, and Research Institutes.

Participants agreed that while the notion of GCED was not new in the region, the challenge was to identify a common understanding in order to develop a sound roadmap for future action. While the ideals of GCED exist in different concepts and in different initiatives across the region, the importance of GCED was recognized as essential to advance sustainable peace in the region. It was also recognized that teachers lacked the requisite qualifications to inculcate GCED values to students across the different education levels and that resources to accompany the teaching were not available.

In particular, the following challenges and obstacles were identified:

- Lack of qualified personnel in the education field to deliver GCED teaching, and therefore the need to strengthen education institutions in Arab states and build the capacities of educators ;
- Lack of resources to produce GCED material, and the need for region-wide mobilization of resources;
- Lack of tools to measure the real impact of GCED initiatives;
- Lack of private sector or civil society involvement
- Negative role of the media in the Arab world, who is promoting hatred discourse.

Given the need for stronger partnerships and networking among GCED-implementing institutions, participants agreed on the creation of the Arab States Regional GCED Network, which aims:

1. To become an “Accelerator” for GCED, to enhance the impact and accelerate the delivery and mechanisms towards the achievements of SDG 4.7;
2. To act as a “Bridge”, to connect the different institutions and organizations within and beyond the region, and to connect with other stakeholders to know about GCED; and
3. To build a “Community” of practice to strengthen the institutional and individual learning capacity through monitoring, data collection, and evaluation.

UNESCO Beirut and APCEIU reiterated their strong commitment to support country-level activities on GCED and to keep the Arab States Regional GCED Network alive and working.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Beirut Office

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Sharm El Sheikh Statement on Higher Education in Crisis Situations in the Arab States

Higher Education in Crisis Situations: Synergizing Policies and Promising Practices to enhance Access, Equity, and Quality in the Arab Region

Sharm El Sheikh- Egypt, 28-29 March 2017

Preamble

We, the participants in the Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education in Crisis Situations, held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 28-29 March 2017, co-convened by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), under the auspices of H.E. Dr. Khaled El Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Arab Republic of Egypt, herby

1. Recall the terms of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1992 Declaration on the Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Arab World and the 1994 Arab Convention on Regulating the Status of Refugees in the Arab Countries,
2. Evoke Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that everyone has a right to education, and that higher education shall be accessible to all on the basis of merit,
3. Take into consideration the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all", in particular target 4.3 which states that "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocation and tertiary education, including university",
4. Take note of the increasing research by international bodies and agencies that higher education is critical in fostering socio-economic and cultural development, at the national and regional levels, and that it plays a major role in providing hope and promoting the values of peace and mutual understanding and develops competencies for living together peacefully for sustainable development,
5. Cognizant of the exceptional circumstances that some Arab States are going through and that the most significant challenge to progress in education is conflict, which exacerbates inequality, poverty, exclusion and marginalization,

Issues and Challenges

6. Highly appreciate the efforts exerted by host countries and international bodies and organizations to respond to the refugee crisis challenges. We call upon the international community to play its role in this joint responsibility towards those displaced persons,
7. Acknowledge that the demand for higher education among those displaced by crisis continues to far outweigh current supply,
8. Note that without significantly enhancing tertiary education support for those affected by crisis in the Arab Region, their countries and the Region in general will be deprived of

skilled human resources in the long term and youth will be increasingly at risk of harmful practices,

9. Recognize that those affected by crisis who wish to pursue their higher education are faced with a number of challenges, namely the recognition of their prior learning, availability of valid documentation needed to enroll in higher education, the need for residency permits when in a host country, learning difficulties when curriculum or language differ from their country of origin, the need for psychosocial-support, and the high cost of higher education.

Recommendations

Based on the principles, issues and challenges reviewed in the Statement on Higher Education in Crisis Situations in the Arab States, "Higher Education in Crisis Situations: Synergizing Policies and Promising Practices to enhance Access, Equity, and Quality in the Arab Region", as adopted by the Conference, and in view of the need for higher education to be prioritized in times of crisis, the Conference has adopted the following recommendations for the Arab States:

Policies, Legal Framework & Coordination

10. To develop policies and legislation that mainstream crisis in national higher education planning and policy and allow for the integration of those affected by crisis in higher education institutions in an equitable manner, through policy responses pertaining to learning language, needed documentation, recognition and accreditation,
11. To enhance coordination and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders to facilitate the provision of higher education for those affected by crisis, including sufficient exchange of information between relevant stakeholders,
12. To facilitate recognition of studies and qualifications and to encourage the use of modern technology means in education and learning,

Data Management

13. To enhance data collection and management as an important driver for policy dialogue and programme planning and implementation,

Regional Cooperation & Institutional Capacity Building

14. To encourage regional cooperation for emergency response preparedness and to build institutional capacities for emergency response preparedness in higher education interventions during times of crisis,
15. To develop a national contingency plan to prepare for and face various emergency and crisis situations in order to ensure access to equitable higher education opportunities to all learners.

Sharm El-Sheikh, 29 March 2017