

VALUES AND LIFE SKILLS -AFRICA (VaLI-A) CONFERENCE REPORT



“Unlocking the power of values and life skills in context”.

Introduction

The Values and Life Skills- Africa (Vali-A) Conference was a milestone as it was the first of its kind to be held in Africa. It was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 21st - 23rd June 2023. It brought together 185 participants from 11 countries. Among the participants were representatives from government institutions from the respective countries, various UN Agencies, Civil society organizations, Researchers, universities and practicing teachers. This conference was hosted by the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI), a regional network of 80 civil society organizations. This report presents a synthesis of the key evidence, emerging issues of the presentations of the Conference on values and life skills in Africa, as well as the key reflections and implications for policy and policy development.

Values and Life skills education

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines life skills as the abilities for positive and adaptive behavior that empower individuals to deal with the challenges of day-to-day life effectively (WHO, 1999). Various agencies such as the UK Department for International Development, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), along with many nongovernmental organizations emphasize the importance of grooming adolescents academically as well as with various noncognitive, socio-emotional and character skills, which are an intrinsic element of quality education. Additionally, the Sustainable development goal (SDG) 4 speaks of imparting quality education and promoting lifelong learning, where quality education denotes imparting as well as learning these life skills and values as an essential attribute for efficacious education (Sayed and Ahmed, 2015).

Values and Life skills (VLSs) generally refer to a diverse set of abilities, competencies, and techniques that are personal and social. Everyone requires in order to deal with the various challenges of life, operate confidently and competently with themselves, the community and the society. This is enshrined in SDG 4 that deals with education and one of its targets is that by the year 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults globally who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. Specifically, beyond work-specific skills, emphasis should be placed on developing high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution.

Importantly, VLSs education fosters mental well-being and empowers youngsters and allows them to take on more responsibility in their lives. Prajapati (2017), notes that life skills education is important for promoting healthy children and adolescent development, preventing some causes of child and adolescent death, disease, and disability, preparing young people for changing social circumstances, and socialization. When VLSs education programs are effectively implemented in schools, children's attitudes may be modified toward others and themselves, resulting in increased self-esteem and self-confidence (Kumar, 2017).

Why Values and Life skills education?

Today's students/youth/adolescents are faced with emerging challenges such as global warming, wars, unemployment, famine, poverty, suicide, population explosion as well as social, emotional, physical and psychological issues. Whereas during this time of one's life is considered the most productive, most of most of them are unable to utilize their potential in an appropriate way due to lack of skills, guidance and motivation. These challenges adversely affect them, thus require immediate and an effective response from a socially responsible system of education. This kind of education should be that which supports and enables one to live life better. It should also emphasis on developing values and life skills among students, to prepare them to be dynamic citizens, who can cope with future challenges, and survive.

Currently, education systems have made strides in equipping children and young people with these skills and to transform their education systems. However, there remain challenges in its implementation particularly due to the implications it has on the curriculum, the materials needed, the kind and quality of teachers required, as well as the suitable pedagogy and assessments needed. Further it requires buy-in from teachers, policy makers, school leaders and communities. Governments should identify reforms that will transform education.

This calls for governments to be more deliberate in their bid to identify reforms that will transform education. This transformation can only be realized through increased financing, building stronger education systems, better learning assessments, higher quality teaching, improving pedagogy to ensure that it prepares students for the 21st century and a renewed commitment to working in partnerships including with parents and communities. In Africa, most systems of education tend to focus more on the intellectual development of the learner at the expense of the other dimensions that influence their general well-being.

The focus on Life skills and values currently is attributed to the positive impact it creates on individuals and increases countries' awareness of their relevance looking at existing problems of their graduates, such as the failure to communicate, collaborate, critically think when they are out of school and their failure to fit into the workplace environment.

Values and Life skills are close to my heart for many reasons; however, the most important reason is because I am a living example of positive impact values and life skills can have on everyone, Life Skills and values have changed my life, I was given a big role a very young age. Despite huge family and personal responsibilities, my values and possession of life skills kept me soaring high. I believe the youth must be prepared for opportunities of the 21st century skills. I was thrown into the role of being a Minister while very young, a mother raising young children and just recently finishing my Masters. Although I did well in my academics, I believe what has helped me to succeed so far is the values and life skills instilled. (Hon Lela Muhamed – Minister of Education, Zanzibar).

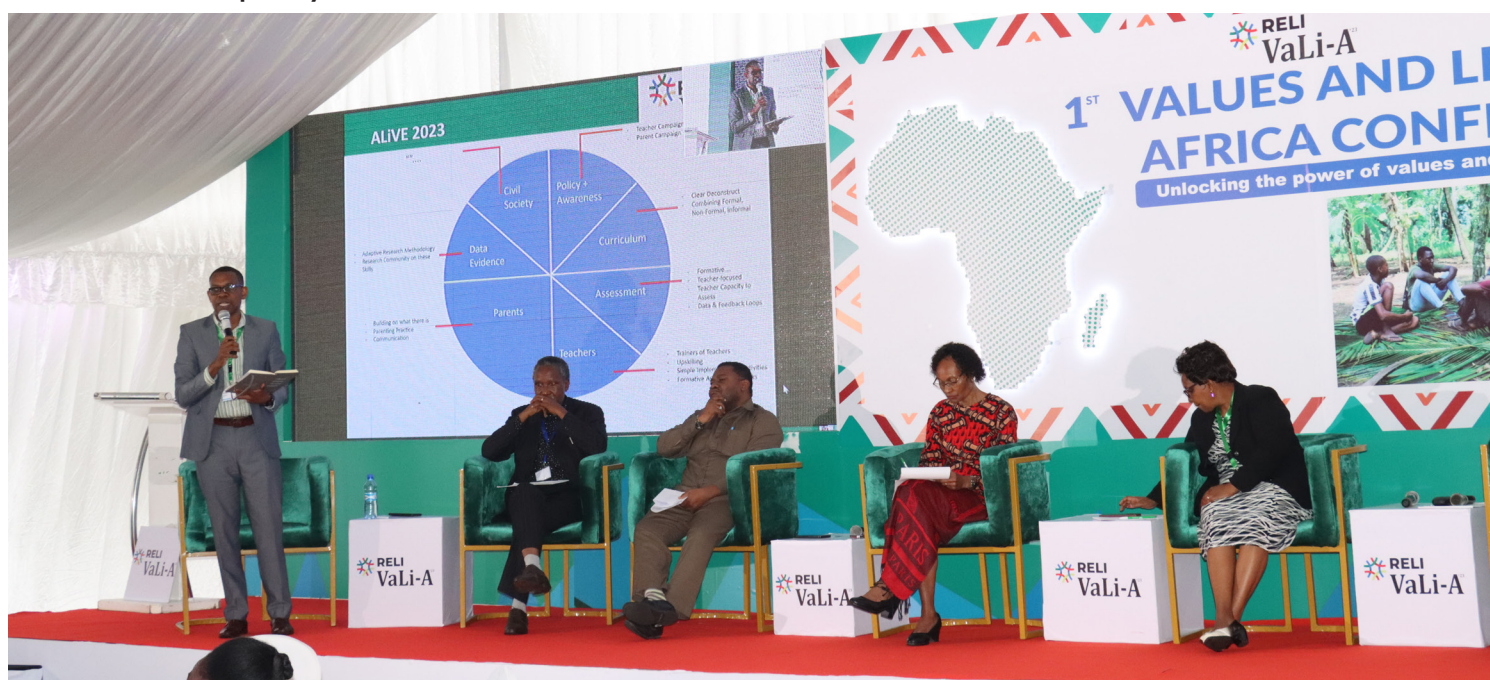


he development and implementation of a Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) that comprises both cognitive and psychosocial competencies have provided an opportunity to promote V&LS. With many countries in the continent now embracing CBC, the African child will no longer be sacrificed on the altar of unhealthy academic competition and mean score. Instead, learners will be facilitated to take charge of their own learning to achieve the set learning outcomes through learner Centered approaches.

In Kenya, the glamour for value and Life skills education has been informed by the need to provide quality education, which entails facilitating learning in all dimensions of growth and development for holistic growth. It has also been informed by the industry's consistently told education providers that employees possess professional competencies but lack values and soft skills necessary for personal development, work ethics and healthy interpersonal relationships at the workplace.

Kenya has also adopted the Values and life skills Education through the Whole School Approach (WSA). Since values are acquired rather than taught this approach emphasizes on the need for all members of the school community to exemplify values and appropriately apply life skills while dealing with challenges of everyday. That way, learners can learn through observation and modelling. The WSA, means it is everybody's business in the school community to ensure that the social interaction, educational programs be they formal, non-learning and school resources are supporting the nurturing of values among learners.

The assessment of life skills and values by the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) targeted 45,442 adolescents of 13-17 years in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. This assessment explored four areas of life skills and values: collaboration, problem solving, self-awareness and respect. The 2023 report showed that about 33% of the respondents struggled to recognize a problem and identify solutions while 49% were able to recognize a problem and act on it to identify a possible solution. Only a few were able to justify solutions or identify multiple approaches to a problem. The trends were almost the same in the other life skills and values with only 14% of the adolescents demonstrating the capacity to regulate their emotions across a range of situations. In terms of respect, a large percentage of adolescents were aware of poor behavior (34%) and able to interpret it as a lack of respect for others or self (50%). Few adolescents (8%) were aware of links between respect for property and people and to act in a respectful way towards others. This evidence is an eye opener for the need to further explore life skills and values, approaches to enhance it and their implications on educational policy.

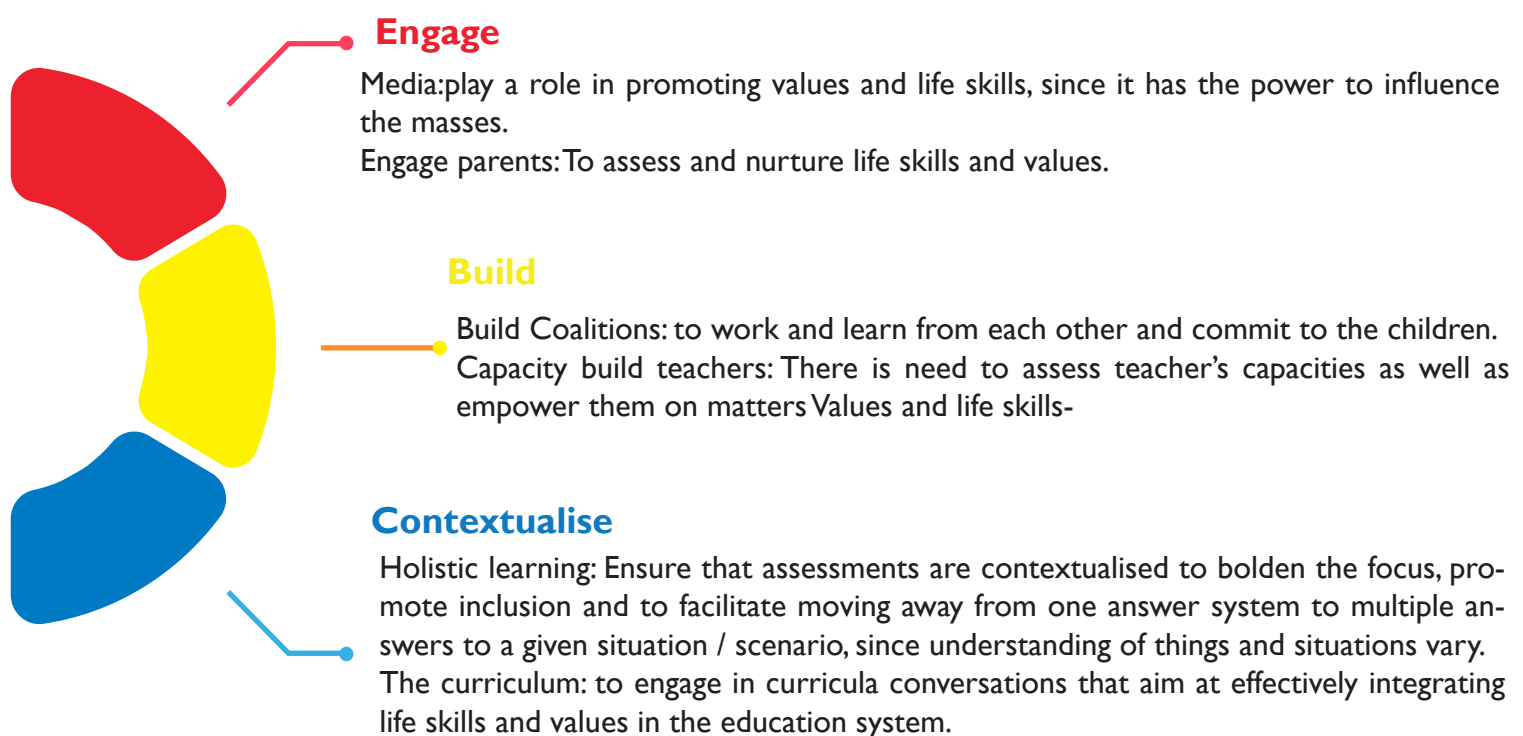


Achieving Context, scale, inclusion, evidence and change through Assessment.

Studies available on assessment of values and life skills indicated that there were no capacities to develop assessment in the region and the tools available for the assessments were not worthy of the East Africa context. The available tools were self-rating and peer rating and where literacy levels were low it could leave out populations who could not consider pen and paper, thus not working for East Africa. The ALiVE study showed that the lack of values and life skills is not an educational burden but a societal burden. Life skills is something personal and not abstract, and in most cases people in the society have chosen not to live them. Schools mirror the society, and many things that happen in schools today emanate from the society. The media broadcasts examples that are not of value, thus there is need to fight this battle of the lack of values and life skills in the society. The ALiVE team was convinced that the values and life skills were the missing link in education due to the glorification of academic score. Thus, the need for the study. The work on assessment values and life skills was further inspired by UWEZO assessment, and the situation in our societies as captured in the excerpt below.

“Observations in our societies indicate that Values and life skills are not lived on a day today basis. We are paying for the lack of values and skills. Looking at the traffic on our roads, the environment and garbage issues, we are paying for lack of values in Kenya... it is clear there is lack of responsibility, respect, patience and empathy, skills of problem solving and critical thinking... Life skills are very personal, annoying us every day because we don't have it... We cannot put the burden on the education system ... schools are just a mirror of society. We need to change... this is not the first attempt on life skills' initiatives... in Kenya there have been initiatives such as Je, Huu ni Ungwana? Ushenzi/Uungwana campaign... thus the media needs to play a constructive role in promoting values and life skills...” (Dr. John Mugo, ED, zizi Afrique).

The dream is to make very simple, big, ambitious and bold and the Conference discussions clearly highlighted need for a clear paradigm shift to focus on the effective assessment life skills and values. Further there is need for a resilient and comprehensive approach to achieve and sustain change within systems of education. The aspects below pointed out what needs to be done to enhance values and life skills.



Prospects and challenges for life skills and values assessments in Africa

- Tanzania has introduced life skills and values (LSV), though not very comprehensively. For instance, in primary school, there is 'Vocational Skills Subject' and a school-based assessment system is used. This is where teachers have guidance to assess vocational skills. During these assessments, the students are assessed theoretically as to whether they have the competencies through explaining, illustrating, drawing. Another approach is Learner Centred Approach where every individual is considered an independent learner and forms are filled. These forms are used to assess students' talents, special needs and behaviours and are also used by the government to select students to join technical schools and advanced schools on merit. There is a continuous assessment of students and marks are considered in the summative exams. At least 30% from formative and 70% summative. Government of Tanzania is trying its best to ensure a holistic approach to assessment. The challenges include high expenses of running LSVs assessments and time consuming. Contextualisation is also a challenge due to the size of Tanzania, regions, districts differ culturally, and causes difficulty for LSV assessments/exams given the diversity.
- In Zanzibar, a new curriculum is being rolled out and LSV is included in assessments. For instance, there is a subject called 'Creativity, Sports and Culture' which includes elements of LSV. Apart from creativity and sports, also paper and pencil assessments are done. EGRA and EGMA are also conducted to promote English efficiency in the national assessment. The biggest challenge is unprepared teachers. There is a distance that we are not catching up to see the values and life skills are not captured.
- In Burundi, families and communities, the school committees are incorporated in LSVs which add value.
- Lessons from Tusome Programme final assessment in grades 1-3 measuring EGRA/EGMA and used the LSV tool to evaluate some programmes and to assess various competencies. This tool developed a measure for self-rating self-confidence and observed confidence of children, it also assessed conflict resolution and learning environment. What stood out was the role of evidence, which is limited in Africa and Kenya specifically, regarding the role of skills and values in academic achievement. There were particularly interesting findings from Kenya; Urban areas have a 10% advantage, 12% advantage to the wealthy and that the difference was due to life skills- attribution of 50% advantage of children in grades 1-3 is attributable to better life skills hence a strong positive message for the potential of skills. In Kenya the main challenge is that teachers were not trained taught on how to teach LSVs as they lack pedagogy, haven't conceptualized LSVs and there's need for them to be retooled to nurture LSCV.

Principles of assessing values

Assessment gives access to information about students, individuals, and communities. It gives information about what is being measured, and why they are doing it. Thus, there is a need to have the target of the measurement very clear from the onset. Information from the assessment is used to evaluate how students learn, how they are taught and the pedagogical strategies. Assessment also avails information on what to assess and teach.

Life skills intentions have become global and are becoming mainstream intentions. From the policy and curriculum documents reviewed from 161 countries – 81% of countries expressed interest in breadth of skills, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are part of them. From the studies the following principles have emerged on life skills and values.

- Life skills are inherent (Natural occurring)
- Skills can be deconstructed. They can be cut up into little pieces and can be taught. Most skills are complex, and their demonstration depends on us bringing together multiple subskills.
- Skills can be increased over time for instance, sharing in children translates to collaboration in adulthood.
- Life skills and values are transferable and teachable. Transfer of learning refers to the use of previously acquired knowledge and skills in new situations.



Integration of values and life skills in the National Curricula: Country experiences

Various countries have put in efforts to integrate values in the National curricular. Kenya is in the process of implementing the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) that comprises both cognitive and psychosocial competencies. The CBC aims at facilitating the acquisition of values and soft skills necessary for personal development, work ethics and healthy interpersonal relationship at the workplace, as well as the emphasis on learner centred approaches. Kenya has further adopted the Values and life skills education through the Whole School Approach which ensures that the social interaction, educational programmes be they formal, non-learning and school resources are supporting the nurturing of values among learners.

Tanzania is guided by its education vision and education philosophy - education for self-reliance and her bid to match the 21st century skills. It has also looked at the contexts which values and life skills can be integrated, for example, at primary level that has 6 learning areas, it has seen the need to balance these Las with knowledge, skills and values in the learning areas for instance the subject History of Tanzania involved looking at the objective of education and having the main competency of the subject broken into specific competencies and specific activities for students to perform so that they can be assessed.. Teachers were also encouraged to prepare self-learning modules on how they can use the syllabus, what topics are there and how they can be approached in the teaching and learning process. Further teachers were helped to select the teaching and learning resources available in their environment to enhance their teaching of LS and values.

In Uganda, a Labor Market survey was conducted, and it revealed that children do not have the skills needed e.g., they have low confidence, communication skills. This informed the curriculum framework, to emphasize problem solving critical skills, knowledge, skills and attitudes. These were incorporated in the academic courses, the teaching and learning process. Further, Direct teacher training emphasis on teaching approaches to those that are focused on changing traditional teaching methodologies to the 21st century, and onsite support in schools to get feedback on individual challenges of teachers.

Another approach is one on one support in schools in some regions so that teachers get a detailed understanding of curriculum expectations especially where there has been a shift from objective design to learning outcomes and competencies. The target was systematically training 50000 teachers per grade, and right now 31000 have been trained.

In Zanzibar, a taskforce with the mandate to make recommendations for transforming the entire education system was formed. Their work included conducting in depth consultations with community members, talking to teachers, students, parents, political and religious leaders as well as other key stakeholders in the sector. It is these and other bold and creative measures that would take Zanzibar on the course towards great transformation in education. Approaches are within reach, learner centred approaches should be heavily encouraged such as: discussions, case studies, storytelling, dramatization so it enables learners internalise and are able to pick values and life skills.

Overall, Values and life skills are largely mainstreamed in the system. In Kenya, the teaching workload remains a challenge considering the teacher shortage. In Uganda, the problem is that of unpacking values and life skills and embedding them in the teaching and learning process. While in Tanzania the problem emanated from the teachers' resistance to CBC and lack of facilities to adequately support



Towards the Nurturing values and life skills: Contextual Approaches

Organization/Approach	Focus/Impact
<p>OCODE, nurtures life skills in the community and with the out of school youth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 13-19 year out of school youth, nurture the 21st century life skills and make them self-aware. • Use of a tool that measures the skills before the programs then another at the end of it. • Use tasks and scenarios. They do role plays, games and debates, scenarios that are context-based. KASH tools (Knowledge, Attitudes, School Habits) Community support structures (Community Development Officers, Social welfare officers) that help the youths practice what has been nurtured in them. The goal is the application of the life skills

<p>Strathmore University Community Service Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Targets secondary schools. Aims at ensuring parents are involved in their children’s education- stems from the power of a parent, a parent introduces the child to the community. •3 pillars, Leadership, Work-Family life balance and Self-awareness •It is very rare to find a child mentioning their parents as their role model, and when they were asked what challenges they faced, parents were mentioned. The project aims at making parents better involved. •Approach: Punishment Versus Reward •The H theory: Head, Heart and hands
<p>Foundation for Inclusive Community Help (FICH)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Focus on Education, livelihood and institutional strengthening. •Aims at making parents, teachers and learners’ equal partners to advance learning in rural and post conflict communities. •Focus is on curriculum around parental empowerment and engagement, to understand the role of parents, to Utilize school data to engage parents, School leadership engagement with parents, Community leaders and to utilize Village education forums and home visits to enhance learning. •Result framework: Schools make informed decisions to engage parents. •It highlights that there is a connection between learning at school, home and community.
<p>Zizi Afrique</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Focuses on establishing a framework for parental empowerment and engagement. And identify skills that parents need to be able to support their children’s learning. •Aims at producing a framework that aligns with various contexts and that promotes advocacy and continued engagement. •Outcome- draft approach that emphasizes Collaboration, Communication, Capacity sharing and Leveraging community resources/ systems

Instruction based Approaches

<p>Teachers' instructional design to nurture learners' critical thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If you want to transform the schools/education, start at school leadership level. Then bring it to the community level. •Established teacher learning community and school leadership support that [positively impacted on teachers and learners and vice versa (in terms of improved knowledge and critical skills, improved instructional design, and improved lesson instruction on the part of teachers, and improved participation and skills and performance among learners) •Aimed at creating Contextualized assessment of students critical thinking, scaling up of the model and advocating for policy reform in teacher education and national assessment. •Highlight: skills are teachable but there is a need to understand we are dealing with teachers who have not experienced such kind of teaching. •They need time to internalize the process.
<p>Milele Zanzibar Foundation Life Skilling Teachers for the 21st century classroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •In MZF's education strategy, teachers are one of the 3 drivers of change. •Have Low knowledge & understanding of STEAM & 21st century skills, Limited capacities to integrate competencies in STEAM subjects and some teachers perform lower in some life skills than students. <p>.The project revealed that Integration of life kills is still a challenge for teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality assurance, Curriculum and teacher education departments ought to be part of the skills design process
<p>Teach for Kenya</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aims at championing SEL through both classroom instruction methodologies and Fellowship Capstone Projects. •At the classroom, it aims at Connecting with learners at a personal level, Creation of an enabling environment for open dialogue and Developing students as leaders.

- approach, -leading self, systems and learning in socio-emotional learning.
- It also seeks to incorporate the 21st century skills in the classroom through project-based learning, value-based learning, role modelling and integration of technology

Whole classroom school approaches

Scaling and embedding whole child development in Kenya

- The Whole Child Development (WCD) Learning Hub approach focuses on core skills and capabilities, a wider social lens, and creating the right conditions for children to flourish.
- Akili Network’s approach within the hub is to educate children on the safe use of the internet.
- KCCB’s Triple radio project targets 12 counties in Kenya, focusing on children aged 6-14 years old and adopting a 360- degree approach that involves children and their significant others.
- Jaslika aims to improve the school environment by facilitating communication and collaboration between teachers, parents, and the entire community.
- The approach considers Role modeling an important aspect of instilling values and skills.
- Involving a wide range of stakeholders, including diverse perspectives of children, teachers, and parents during the design phase.
- Segmenting the child audience into different age groups for effective engagement.
- Encouraging teacher engagement in the WCD ecosystem as a supplement to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).
- Applying a gender lens to address specific needs and challenges related to gender.

<p>WISE-EDN Social and Emotional Learning the Solid Foundation for 21st Century Education and Society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The focus is on foundational skills, technology, information, media literacy, critical thinking, and life skills. •Moral education is seen as an essential part of SEL, with a framework emphasizing identity, values, and perspectives. •The classroom is viewed as an active agent that needs to interact with society. •The end goal of SEL is to make the community better, promoting continuous practices like love and creating a ripple effect of care. •The curriculum incorporates brain-based learning, psychology of learning, and explicit teaching methods. •Collaborative clubs have been developed with schools and civil societies.
<p>FHI 360- Building a National SEL program from the Ground Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The program, called USAID tunoze kusoma: let's improve reading, is a 5-year initiative focused on developing a SEL framework aligned with the curriculum. •The program is also involved in continuing the development of assessment tools such as IDELA and ISSELLA. •The framework emphasizes the skills that children need to succeed in school and the future. •The framework includes CBC competencies and SEL domains. <p>The implementation approach focuses on complementing and strengthening the CBC, using locally created activities, integrating SEL across programming, and building the capacity of systems, teachers, and stakeholders.</p>
<p>Strathmore University TAI project- Approaches to Enhancing Life Skills and Values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Targets secondary schools in Kitui County, with a focus on parental engagement, mentorship, values, and improving pedagogy. •The process includes mentorship and in-class training for students, teacher-level interventions, and a focus on parental leadership. •The framework used is the pedagogy of integration of the person, incorporating the head, heart, and hand framework.

- The outcomes of the project include a checklist of likes and dislikes, feedback from contextualized stories on peer pressure, civic dimension emphasizing respect, and environmental dimension.
- Successes of the project include the creation of an assessment tool for students at different stages, improvement in KCSE results, and mentoring over 2000 students, indicating a relationship between values and skills and academic performance.

Systemic approaches to Life skills and values

Adapting assessment to policy and learning – ADAPT Uganda

- ADAPT conceived after limited evidence on incorporating life skills, how to define them etc.
 - Purpose – to understand how assessments have been used to inform policy and practice.
 - Formative study in Uganda key lesson – there are many key stakeholders but limited coordination among them and lack of enough opportunity to engage with policy and practice.
 - Methodology – systems thinking methodology used for this aspect of mapping.
 - Why do systems think – there are many actors doing good things but without looking at it as a system, then we don't get a good picture and blames happen across the different actors, leading to the child suffering.
 - Results – inadequate resources to nurture and assess 21st century skills; weak policy framework, stakeholder attitude inclined towards traditional education and assessment based on grades, family, community and public do not demonstrate skills required for adolescents and teachers inclined to old system which they were educated.
- Recommendations –
- Prioritize education by increasing the national budget, funding public and private institutions, implementation of policy in school.
 - stakeholder engagement: harmonize definition of 21st C skills, adapt and further contextualize ALiVE tool to assess more skills and values.
 - sensitize parents and other stakeholders on the value of skills in their assessment.
 - equip school facilities with appropriate teacher-learner ratios, improve teacher pedagogy through training in nurturing and assessing skills

<p>ADAPT Tanzania- Adapting assessment to policy and learning: Adolescent 21st century skills – Tanzania lessons learnt.</p> <p>-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aimed at generating lessons, building capacity and mobilizing policy uptake to utilize learning. •ADAPT, builds on ALIVE learnings, strengthening utilization of data in curriculum design and delivery, promote acquisition of 21st C skills for adolescents, focus on helping education systems and non-stake orgs, incorporate acquisition of skills within adolescents. •Findings formative study– assessments are available, sometimes data not reliable and evidence not being used to inform policy. •Findings mapping – current learning at primary and secondary education does not adequately integrate 21st C skills, there is a different understanding of what life skills are, redefine and identify those that are needed. •joint public dialogue for policy: no existing relationship among stakeholders, parents unaware of importance of LS development and assessment, need for public dialogue among actors to push policy reforms in TZ. •inadequate and underutilization of assessment results: actors aware of the presence but not necessarily using them, still focused on cognitive skills and life skills being ignored. •Recommendation – definition of LS, dynamic learning communities, advocacy on LS asst, capacity building of teachers, revise curriculum to define learning and assessing LS.
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<p>Mauritius institute of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The education systems’ expectation is to have holistic development of the learner to be autonomous responsible citizens, that can communicate effectively and become better responsible citizens. •Primary curriculum at the center is 21st C competencies – life skills, values, citizenship education and ICT. •Values and citizenship Education grade 1-6 – learners exposed to the society values, •The challenge is lack of textbooks, only teachers book with guides and workbooks for learners. •There is need to ensure values are shared despite different cultures.
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Approaches to values and life skills education in Kenya

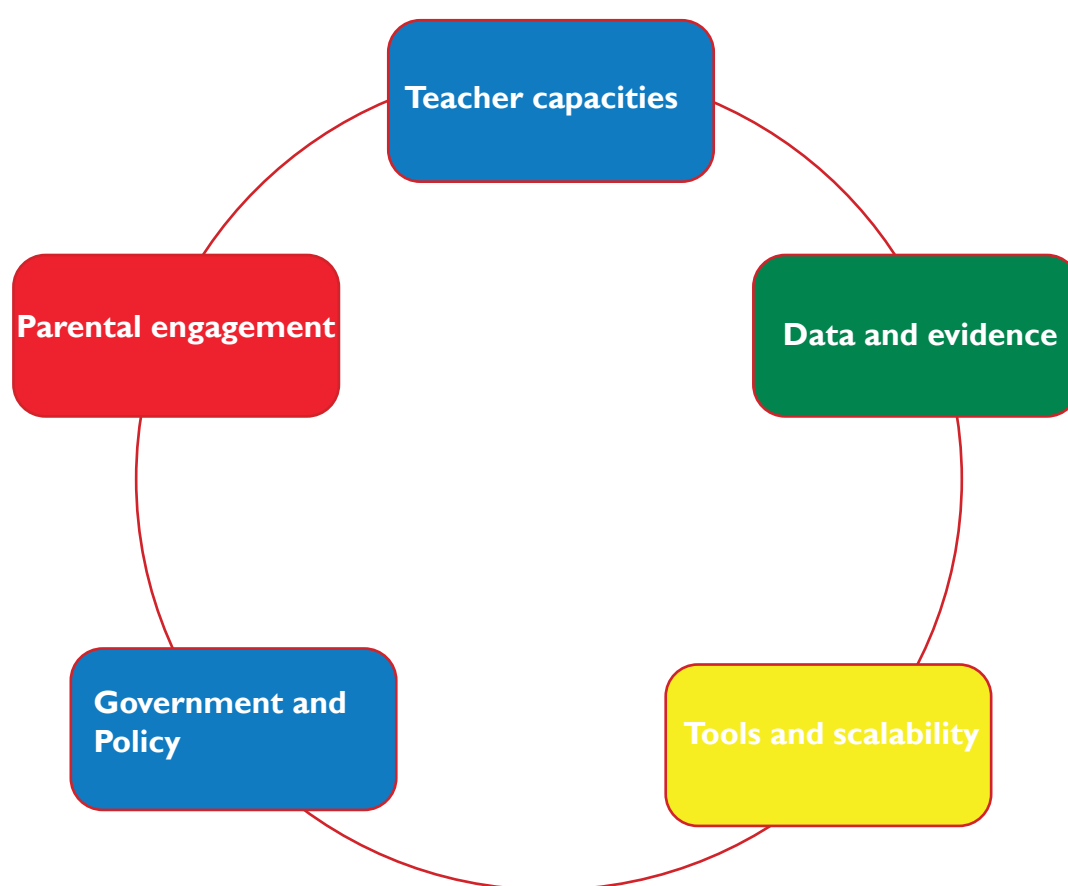
Approaches to values and life skills education in Kenya

- Definition of values, life skills, approaches to be accomplished through whole school approach by mobilizing the entire school and resources to develop these skills and values and the values are largely caught than taught.
- All learners have an opportunity to via basic education where life skills and values are integrated.
- In JSS, life skills become a stand-alone subject. In the traditional curriculum, 844 was there, but not assessed and easily dismissed.
- Curriculum designs have a guide that also covers a documentation of suggested values, pertinent and contemporary issues, community service-learning activities.
- Types of learning experiences within the formal system is guided by selected learning activities using learner-centered approaches like discussions, group work, debates case studies), non-formal (games, societies, clubs, assemblies or other programs in schools where learners model the values.
- Teachers use cooperative approaches to model values as they interact with peers) and informal set-ups (general social interactions in school, home and wider community to model the values; can be through talking walls, tress proper dressing, polite language, empathy sharing resources; school creates a culture of expected norms that everyone should model)
- Inductive methods, co-curricular activities with value-based themes, use of entertainment and reward system
- Assessment tools include checklists, portfolio, rating scales, observation schedules, written tests, learner' profiles, projects, journals, oral questioning, rubrics, questionnaires.

Prioritization of Life Skills and Values in Education Policy

In the Philippines there is focus on curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, skills audit, subject by grade, classroom observations and physical environment with the aim to enhance skills. The Australian framework on life skills and values focus on general capabilities with no explicit guidelines for teaching in the curriculum, there are no specific lessons for life skills. It was observed that ethical issues are about fair and unfair and therefore based on teachers' interpretation. In the case of Zambia, aims, principles, values, competencies, subjects are clearly indicated in the curriculum design with learners' activities and the teachers' role, showing how the teacher should be involved.

On the progress made by East African countries in prioritizing life skills and values, the variables that came into play were as shown in the diagram below:



Whereas sensitization and advocacy efforts have increased awareness, further action is still required. Capacity building initiatives have been implemented, but additional efforts are needed as seen in data and evidence from the Assessment of Life skills and Values (ALIVE) in the 3 countries. This has prompted the government institutions to follow up. The governments have begun to talk to people about integration of LSV because of the evidence.

Ultimately, embedding life skills and values in the curriculum is important as it could be an entry point of working with the government. Supporting teachers in the teaching environment would also enhance life skills and values. There is also a need to explore policy shift to non-formal educational spaces, community and parental space.

Achieving Policy shifts in Life skills and values: what must we do?

- Align V&Ls, with government priorities, leverage on academic reforms
- Make it simple, focused and interactive, tailor content to context
- Involve all the stakeholders, Live values in the community
- Teacher- support and genuine engagement
- Focus on non-formal education spaces like communities.
- Assessment: determine examinable concepts of V&LFS, create tools that objectively assess values and LSs

Conference Resolutions

Kenya

Establish a national steering committee to drive awareness on

The biggest impediment to CBC implementation is inadequate awareness and information among parents and teachers on why a different way of educating our children is necessary. To address this, the conference recommended that the Cabinet Secretary leads the way and appoints a national steering committee to coordinate and implement a national campaign, led by the Ministry and involving all education SAGAs, the media, parliament, civil society organizations, religious leaders and everyone else who can make impact on this. Part of this strategy might involve the formation of clubs in schools, on aspects such as values and life skills.

Develop an evidence-based life skills and values enhancement framework.



Whereas there is a clear policy framework on CBC, there lacks elaborate curricular programs on life skills and values and proper coordination on their implementation in schools. To address this, the Conference recommended that the Ministry of Education, through the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards, provides a systematic and coordinated way of teaching values and life skills with clear pedagogical approaches as well as to open other forums like co-curriculum activities and mentorship in schools to strengthen the teaching of values and life skills.

Increase investment in Teacher training to enhance the teaching of CBC.

From the presentations made during the conference, it was evident that there exist different approaches that support the embedding of life skills and values within the other subjects. The conference recommended that the CS takes the lead in appealing to the Government to increase investment in the training of teachers, reskilling them, enhancing quality teaching, delivery of instructions and assessment of life skills and values. Further, this can be done in collaboration with universities, TTIs and other research institutions to generate robust evidence that can be used to promote teachers' ability to model and nurture understanding of the various values and life skills in contexts.



Develop and Implement Parental Empowerment and Engagement programs on nurturing life skills and values.

The conference identified the opportunity to strengthen parental empowerment and engagement in order to realize the CBC vision, and in particular the nurturing of values and life skills. The MoE and KICD should bring all the actors in education as well as the media together to review the existing parental guidelines and develop an implementation strategy. This is because many parents limit their engagement to the provision of necessities and homework and are not fully aware of how they can nurture life skills and values. Yet, most of these values and competences are learnt naturally at home, through deliberate modeling and mentorship.

Uganda

Renewed emphasis on the role of values and Life skills education

There is a growing need to embrace V&LS in education and training to enhance acquisition of the 21st Century skills and adaptability to the changing life, work and societal needs for a sustainable future. The review of the Primary school curriculum, starting July is a window to focus on for the integration of life skills and values in the curriculum.



Develop an Advocacy strategy.

There is a need to focus on all the stakeholders in promoting V&LS. There is need for advocacy for enhanced parental engagement, community, school administrators and civil society's involvement for increased understanding and appreciation for life skills and values. This will be done by harnessing political will and stakeholder buy-in for the different initiatives being proposed to support popularizing, nurturing and assessing life skills and values. Workshops can also be organized to foster a harmonized understanding and importance of life skills and values across the different stakeholders.

Integrate Life skills in teacher training curriculum and retooling of teachers.

The curricular used by different training institutions do not adequately incorporate life skills assessment and methodologies. Further, the in-service teachers do not have a common understanding of values and Life skills. It is recommended that the teacher education curriculum should include the concept and practices and how to contextualize and nurture them. It is recommended that there is a need to develop materials to support the retooling of all teachers across the country. Develop a module for teacher training that integrates pedagogical practices and methodologies for assessing and nurturing life skills and values.

Create a database on nurturing Life skills and values.

The Conference highlighted the need to establish a contextual understanding of life skills education in the varied contexts. The database will exhibit robust evidence and provide an avenue to learn about the best practices on nurturing life skills and values, and where the adapt/adopt the ALIVE tools for assessment of life skills and values will be stored. It will also help the various institutions to engage in what is already going on. In the database there will be documented success stories on curriculum implementation within the classroom and how this is translating into acquisition of actual skills among the learners.

Tanzania

Resolution 1: Parental and Community Engagement

During the conference, this was highlighted that communities and parents' mindsets are stuck in the traditional curriculum. It was recommended that there is need for empowerment on values and life skills. Adoption of multi-approaches like the use of media platforms, school boards and committees, religious leaders, were identified as important in parental and community engagement. The conference suggested that TenMet and RELI should partner on community empowerment and the best approach to affect change is bottom-up because this is where implementation of most policies take place.

Resolution 2: Increased Focus on Teachers and Teacher Training

Teachers are crucial in delivering effective life skills and values education. To enhance their ability to do so, teacher training programs should: Incorporate modules on life skills and values education into pre-service and in-service training, equip teachers with teaching methodologies that foster critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and empathy. Providing resources and tools that enable teachers to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment is also important. Encourage collaboration among teachers and between teachers and parents to share best practices and experiences in teaching life skills and values.

Resolution 3: Onboard Politicians and Policy makers

Politicians hold power and influence the youth. There is a need to create awareness among the politicians on the life skills and values so that they do not lead in destroying these values in the society. Politicians as Policy influencers also have the capacity to contribute to life skills and values by: Incorporating life skills and values education into national curriculum frameworks and educational policies, allocating sufficient resources for the development and implementation of effective life skills and values programs in schools, promoting research and evidence-based practices in life skills and values education and collaborating with educational institutions, experts, and stakeholders to design comprehensive programs.

Resolution 4: Strengthen collaboration between Universities, Government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Collaboration among these stakeholders was a major gap in creating a holistic approach to enhancing life skills and values. The conference recommended that there was need for collaboration among key stakeholders to develop and disseminate resources and materials for life skills and values education, advocate for policies that prioritize life skills and values education, provide mentorship programs and extracurricular activities that reinforce positive values and skills.

Together they could also organize targeted group intervention by organizing workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns for parents, teachers, and students.

Zanzibar

Resolution 1: Enhance the status of Teachers.

There is need to focus beyond training of teachers to teachers' status. It is important to lift the status of teachers as the image of a teacher in the society is crucial. Modelling teachers to make them champions of life skills and values. We want teachers who can model for other teachers.

Resolution 2: Create Awareness on Life Skills and Values.

There were recommendations on the importance of community sensitization on ways to support teachers collaborate with teachers in nurturing LSV. Community should be brought on board in instilling values and life skills to children and youths. To tackle awareness of stakeholders, the conference recommended that RELI team to work together with Zanzibar government.

Resolution 3: Shift in curriculum.

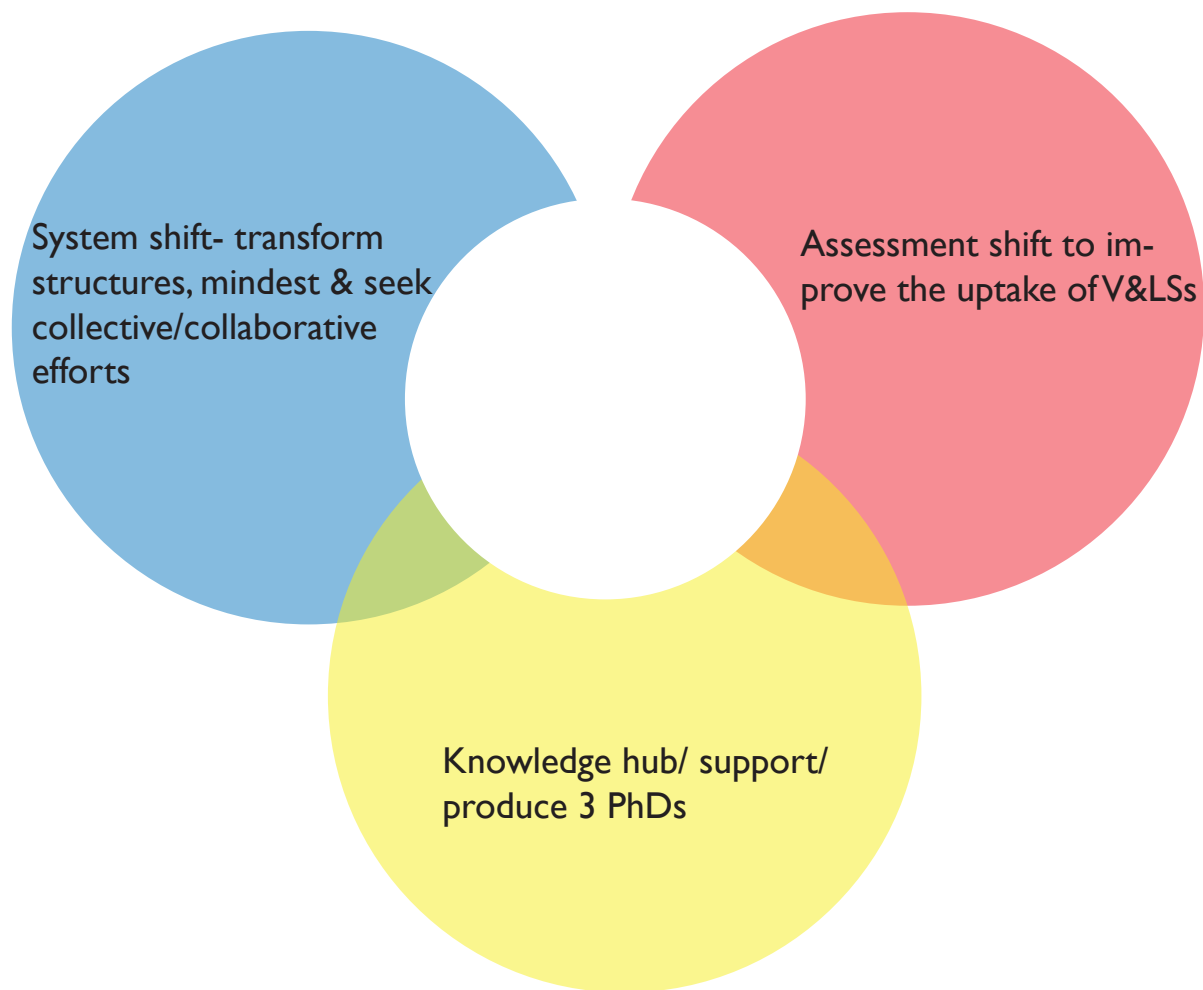
The old curriculum does not adequately address values and LSs education. It is important that the relevant stakeholders redesign the frameworks/documents to highlight how to integrate VLSs. Since the curriculum reform is still in the early stages, it could be made concrete by looking at what works and mapping available resources which can assist the implementation of the annual plans to roll out curriculum. These could come from both government and non-government organizations. A committee has just been established with members from Ministry of Health and Ministry of Information Youth Sports and Culture and RELI/ALIVE Technical Working Group could be included in this committee to ensure a continuous engagement on Life skills and values.

Resolution 4: Build cross-country collaboration.

These could be important in learning how to support teachers and how to integrate VLSs. A country in point was Rwanda and Kenya who have made annual plans to integrate LSV into CBC. It was also recommended that Zanzibar could welcome or visit Zambia to gain and share experiences on curriculum guidelines.



Way Forward ??



Further reading:

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Sayed, Y. and Ahmed, R. (2015), "Education quality, and teaching and learning in the post-2015 education agenda", *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 40 No. C, pp. 330-338, Doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2014.11.005.

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