The timeframe for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is tight, and the world also faces the debilitating consequences of COVID-19. *NISSEM Global Briefs* aim to show how SDG Target 4.7 themes and social and emotional learning (SEL) can be embedded in education policies, programs, curricula, materials, and practice to help make progress towards sustainable development.

This third volume of *NISSEM Global Briefs* focuses on social and emotional learning in context and includes 13 papers by a total of 60 contributors.

With a preface by Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, and a foreword by Koji Miyamoto, Senior Economist, the World Bank.

'For textbook authors, publishers, and SEL developers, NISSEM Global Briefs: Educating for the Social, the Emotional and the Sustainable is a must read.'

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Our aim is to integrate SDG Target 4.7 and SEL skills into educational materials.

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SEL in context

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Preface

STEFANIA GIANNINI

Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

As complex social and emotional beings, humans learn to build peaceful and sustainable societies not only through their cognitive efforts but also via holistic processes that incorporate mind, emotions, body, and relations. In the right environment, learners express, integrate and manage their emotions, desires and anxieties in connection with attaining their other learning outcomes. They can also develop competencies to empathize, cooperate and confront conflicts and injustices, contributing to social cohesion. Where holistic approaches to education support emotional learning and the creation of healthy social ties, lasting transformations in gender equality, peace and non-violence, health and well-being, and sustainable societies, can result.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) practices range across contexts, requiring attention not only to cultural norms but also the wider ecology of relations among learners, schools, communities, and surrounding ecosystems, including the hierarchies and unevenness that characterize these relations.

Many education systems already work across these ecosystems to support learning that encompasses competencies relating to the self, to others, and to society. Where the safeguarding of intangible heritage and transmission of traditional knowledge systems pass on ways of being and relating to others, the land and the spiritual environment, education already supports the emotional and social development of learners towards peaceful and just societies. This volume importantly highlights some of the places where SEL is already contextually articulated.

Where school systems have been overly impacted by rational-logical philosophies that have overemphasized cognition, denigrated emotion, and severed social relations, SEL offers the potential to reconnect the social, emotional, cognitive, and ethical domains of students' identities towards broader social purposes. In recent years, significant research, pedagogical innovations and dedicated educators have brought SEL into educational practice to complement the existing focus on cognition. Tracing the movements of SEL and dialoguing contexts, frameworks, foundations, and practices, this volume offers new possibilities for SEL to invigorate education by recognizing the learner as a whole, integrative being.

UNESCO's recent and expansive envisioning for learning, *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education* (2021), prioritizes SEL as a key component of a matrix of competencies that supports the achievement of peace with one another and the Earth. Along with the development of such key capacities as collaboration, agency, responsibility, empathy, critical and creative thinking, SEL is essential to 'building the capabilities that make students autonomous and ethical thinkers and doers' (UNESCO, *Reimagining*, p. 47) who can contribute to social change. With an eye to supporting Sustainable Development Goals not only for quality education (SDG 4), but also towards gender equality (SDG 5), and peace and justice (SDG 16), UNESCO is creating materials for educators and policy-makers across education systems to reconfigure the ways we do learning by integrating SEL.

As part of the global dialogue on SEL, this volume offers important contributions for how SEL might support contextual, social aims of education systems, including for human rights, support for marginalized learners, interculturality, and gender equality. It also articulates how education systems more broadly, from infrastructures to school leadership, can support SEL in return. As such, it offers a key contribution to the diverse ways that SEL can strengthen education and our capacity to care and cooperate.

Foreword

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1 Introduction

Primary school students in Japan participate in distributing school lunch to their fellow classmates. In each class, a group of children is given the responsibility to work as a team. They arrange the classroom into a temporary canteen, carry the pots of food from the school kitchen, serve out portions on trays, and ensure that all classmates receive a meal in an orderly and equitable manner. All students are asked to provide feedback to the school chefs and express gratitude for the valuable services they have provided. Moreover, the students are often asked to reflect on the nutritional value of the meal, the virtue of not wasting food, and the importance of recycling the containers. Given that the menu tends to vary considerably each day, most children are also encouraged to be open-minded and explore new ingredients and presentation.

This is what social and emotional learning looks like in action.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can be characterized as a learning process through which individuals develop their capacity to *engage with others, care for others, manage emotions, work towards goals, and broaden points of view*. Communication, empathy, self-confidence, perseverance, and open-mindedness are among the core elements of this capacity, which is conventionally called socio-emotional skills. Evidence points to certain socio-emotional skills that matter depending on the key outcomes of interest (e.g., finishing college, earning more, and maintaining healthy lifestyles) (OECD, 2015). The diversity of existing SEL activities partly reflects the differences in the skills and outcomes that policies and programs target. Existing frameworks of socio-emotional skills tend to cover broad domains, given that the societal objectives tend to be diverse.

Over the past ten years, I have had the pleasure of introducing SEL to a diverse group of policy makers, educators, and students in over 30 countries at various levels of economic and social development. Except for stakeholders in the United States and the United Kingdom, where many school jurisdictions have already adopted SEL, the audiences were often intrigued by this foreign terminology. The term 'social and emotional learning' rarely translates well into many languages and cultures. Nevertheless, once presented with concrete examples of learning activities and the underlying skills they are designed to foster, stakeholders tend to quickly embrace its core concepts and appreciate its importance. Some of them soon realize that they have once been engaged in an SEL.

Various forms of activities aimed at nurturing individuals' socio-emotional skills existed long before the 21st century, although they were not referred to as such. School lunch preparation in Japan is one of many examples observed around the world. There are also apprenticeships, religious studies, and volunteering. While many of them have been delivered for purposes other than fostering socio-emotional skills, they are also believed to play an important role in promoting diligence, teamwork, and respect. When corporal punishment was used by educators, it was often justified as a necessary measure to curb children's misbehaviours but was also used as a pretext to improve their respect for others and sense of responsibility. Some of these activities were likely delivered under the prerogative of individual schools, educators, and parents, based more on norms and habits rather than on evidence. Whether or not they have been effective in fostering socio-emotional skills, or can be called SEL in a modern sense, it is important to highlight that there has long been an interest in fostering such skills.

Over the past decade, there has been a surge in SEL around the world as more education stakeholders have started to recognize the significant and wider benefits of fostering socio-emotional skills in society. Some of the most promising interventions have progressively integrated SEL into the formal curriculum by

ensuring that the concept of socio-emotional skills and the theory of change are well appreciated by stakeholders, with a design based on what works, and with the integration of formative assessment. This trend is changing the ways in which educators and parents strive to prepare children and youth for their future.

The cornerstone of this modern approach has been the gradual shift towards system-wide integration of SEL, whereby the development of socio-emotional skills becomes part of the core education objectives within the entire school jurisdiction. In this way, SEL is no longer limited to advanced teaching and learning tools reserved for high-resourced and progressive schools. Another important development is that SEL programs are increasingly widening the scope of socio-emotional skills by including those that pertain to individual's capacity to broaden points of views and be open to new experiences. This will likely help learners better respond to the reality of 21st century society, which is highly unpredictable and volatile.

This volume of *NISSEM Global Briefs* is extremely timely and much anticipated, given that ongoing education, health and economic challenges call for innovative ways to foster children's socio-emotional skills around the world. At this moment, in March 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt learning, contribute to a high incidence of mental disorders, and bring continued uncertainties to the labor market and society. The global experiences that contributors present in this volume can help to improve the ways in which SEL activities are prepared and delivered in the future.

In what follows, I share my reflections on the significance and evolution of SEL over the past decade as well as areas in which SEL can potentially expand and flourish in the future.

2 The significance of SEL

Social and emotional skills are basic human capabilities that have always been highly rated in the minds of educators and parents. I would argue that the significance of social and emotional skills

and the learning process designed to foster these skills have become even more prominent during the past decade in many countries. This is partly driven by the changing social contexts that demand that children, youth and adults cope with challenging circumstances, leverage opportunities to flourish in the society, and achieve happiness and well-being. Moreover, education stakeholders appear to have a much stronger appreciation of SEL due to their improved conceptual understanding of socio-emotional skills and development process behind such skills. This also derives from an increase in the evidence base on what works in SEL and how far these skills affect people's lives.

Recent labor market contexts point to the urgency of increasing children and youth's capacity to respond to unfamiliar and dynamic circumstances and to be able to learn flexibly and continuously. For instance, the rapidly changing nature of jobs in the past decades in both emerging and advanced economies calls for workers with a stronger capacity to engage in non-routine tasks and those who can exercise creativity, teamwork, and adaptability to new work modalities (World Bank, 2019). Indeed, one of the major challenges for enterprises around the world is to secure workers with a balanced set of socio-emotional skills to help improve productivity and expand business development (World Bank, 2016). There is now a strong perception among policy makers and business leaders that one of the major domains of skills shortages lies in socio-emotional skills (OECD, 2020a; Bughin et al., 2018).

The past decade has witnessed a gradual shift in the mindsets of policy makers across countries for whom economic objectives have normally been the central focus of interest. Their attention has started to include well-being and happiness as overarching societal objectives (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009; OECD, 2020b). This movement has also touched on education policies in several countries, including India and South Korea (Kim & Kim, 2020), in which happiness education has been introduced to counterbalance the tendencies of school practices to excessively focus on academic progress (see Das, in this volume). Evidence as well as common

sense underline how much social and emotional skills such as self-esteem, perseverance, and curiosity are associated with children and youth's capacity to achieve happiness and maintain well-being (OECD, 2015).

More recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic has also elevated societal concerns regarding the mental health of children and youth. Many educational institutions have resorted to remote or blended learning modalities during school closures (World Bank 2020; World Bank, 2021). The shortages in childcare facilities have also contributed to the mental health challenges among parents. Moreover, the major disruptions that COVID-19 has caused in the labour market have led to an increase in the incidence of mental health issues among workers (OECD, 2021). The truth is that the societal costs of not addressing mental ill-health has always been known to be considerable even before the COVID-19 pandemic, which amounted to 4% of GDP across EU countries (Trautmann, Rehm & Wittchen, 2016; OECD, 2018). The magnitude of the societal costs of inaction is likely to have increased significantly during this pandemic. Countries can no longer afford to only focus on reactive approaches including counselling and psycho-social support. These efforts can be usefully complemented by SEL interventions that can help to reduce the incidence of mental ill-health as well as to improve individual coping strategies. Recent evidence from mindfulness interventions, which are increasingly integrated as part of the SEL interventions, provide support for such proactive strategies (Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, & Walach, 2014).

The knowledge base on socio-emotional skills and SEL has flourished over the past decade (CASEL, 2021; OECD, 2015; Kautz et al., 2014). One area that has seen a surge in reports prepared by educators and researchers is the conceptual framework that describes socio-emotional skills and the theory of changes designed to explain how these skills can be shaped through contexts and interventions (see for example, Harvard-EASEL Lab's inventory of existing frameworks: http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/). Some of these frameworks show that socio-emotional skills develop and change with age, and are shaped by a combined impact of biological and environmental factors, as well as life events (Chernyshenko, Kankaras & Drasgow, 2018). These frameworks have played an important role in clarifying for education stakeholders how SEL works to foster socio-emotional skills, helping to increase interest in it by showing how educators can make a difference.

It is no coincidence that the expansion of the conceptual frameworks has taken place while an increasing body of evidence was progressively pointing out the methodologies and enabling environments for SEL to work. While a large proportion of the most rigorous evidence comes from the U.S. and the U.K., an increasing number of studies come from Africa, East Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Many of the new SEL programs build on this evidence and integrate evaluation not only to validate the intervention methodology but also to identify ways to further improve the design. Some of these programs have been the subject of meta-analyses that have indicated the overall impact as well as insights into good practices. Overall, the meta-analyses suggest a body of SEL intervention programs that have meaningful impact on socio-emotional skills as well as academic, labor market and social outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney, Durklak, & Weissberg, 2018; Corcoran et al., 2018). Moreover, a study of several impactful SEL programs points to high cost–benefit ratios, which implies that SEL can also be a viable intervention strategy from a purely economic perspective (Belfield et al., 2015).

3 The evolution of SEL

Various forms of informal and nonformal learning activities that have bearing on socio-emotional skills of children and youth existed long before the term SEL started becoming widely used by educators. Many of these activities took place in the community as well as in schools, but outside of classrooms in the form of extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, and recreation. They

were likely to have been delivered independently by individual schools, educators, facilitators, and parents based on their personal experience, norms, and customs. I would argue that educators delivered these activities without being completely aware of the socio-emotional skills that they had the potential to develop. By the same token, the students who engaged in these activities were probably less mindful about their potential impact on the development of specific socio-emotional skills.

The modern forms of SEL have started to emerge during the past few decades with the introduction of SEL activities in formal school curricula, either as a stand-alone SEL intervention or integrated into existing school subject syllabuses (e.g., math, language, and history). I would argue that this is how SEL became part of the core objectives of education in schools that have employed SEL as part of their overall learning strategy. The above-mentioned informal and nonformal learning activities generally remained as complementary activities to these curricular activities.

Modern forms of SEL have several distinctive features. First, they typically come with a locally contextualized conceptual framework that characterizes the socio-emotional skills the interventions are designed to enhance. The SEL programs dedicate time and effort to informing instructors and students about the targeted skills and the process by which these skills will be developed through the interventions. Secondly, the interventions are typically designed based on certain known features of what works. One of the well-recognized examples of this is the SAFE principle, whereby SEL interventions that are sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) are likely to be more effective than otherwise (Durlak, 2011). Thirdly, the interventions are usually designed to ensure consistency across learning contexts. There is a recognition that making meaningful improvements to student's socio-emotional skills requires the home and community learning environment to be well aligned to the efforts made in schools. Lastly, the modern forms of SEL interventions also tend to involve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms that allow for teachers and learners

to receive meaningful feedbacks from the evaluations to help improve the subsequent learning process.

The U.S. and the U.K. are among the few countries in which a large group of educators and researchers have worked to improve the conceptual understanding of SEL, progressively develop, pilot and validate SEL intervention programs across the country, and prepare viable metrics that allow educators to monitor and evaluate the learning process and provide feedbacks to students and teachers. An increasing number of school jurisdictions in these countries have started to leverage this knowledge and transform the learning process. A wealth of institutions, including CASEL, the American Institutes of Research (AIR) and Harvard University's EASEL Lab conduct extensive research on SEL and use it to guide school districts to plan, develop and deliver SEL programs. These institutions also extend their support internationally.

A growing number of countries now recognize the power of SEL in addressing their policy priorities. They include the urgency of promoting learning recovery from COVID-19 (Portugal), fostering well-being (Canada), raising happiness (India) reducing violence (Colombia), and coping with forced displacement (Lebanon). Some countries have prepared SEL by building on existing forms of locally grounded activities (e.g., meditation in Bhutan). Other countries have adapted what works from around the world into local cultural adaptations (e.g., positive discipline in Uganda). Countries such as Colombia and Uganda are already in the process of delivering these interventions at scale, while others such as Bhutan and India have already administered system-wide interventions. This volume includes similar and equally promising examples of interventions from low- and middle-income countries and the efforts they have made to ensure local relevance.

One of the cornerstones of a recent evolution in SEL is its systemic integration, whereby SEL becomes part of the core objectives of the education system. This makes it possible for all schools within a district to follow a common conceptual framework, learning standards, locally relevant SEL programs,

teachers' preparation and continuous support programs, learning materials, as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies. In this way, the SEL programs will also become available to vulnerable and disadvantaged students who would likely benefit the most. Moreover, system-level integration allows for SEL to be delivered consistently across stages of education for which the school district is responsible for, helping ensure that SEL interventions taking place at each stage of education will leverage the interventions that have taken place in the previous stage. Several school districts in the U.S. (e.g., State of Illinois, State of Washington, and California's CORE School Districts) have already integrated SEL in their entire education system. The State of Washington as well as Estonia have both adopted learning standards that are developmentally appropriate across stages of education and adapted the interventions accordingly.

Another notable pattern in the recent evolution of SEL is that in all levels of education (from ECD to tertiary), schools are increasingly emphasizing the domains of socio-emotional skills that allow students to broaden their points of view. While this notion of broadening horizons has been one of the features of peace education and UNESCO's Learning to Live Together (LTLT) initiative, the new SEL movement has further elevated the prominence of this domain of skills. Education systems in countries such as Singapore, South Korea and Portugal employ programs designed to enhance skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and aesthetic appreciation. This is in contrast with the domains of socio-emotional skills that have arguably received more focus in the past such as orderliness, tact, punctuality, dependability, perseverance, and delay of gratification. While these skills remain among the socio-emotional skills of interest to many educators around the world, the recent emphasis on broadening points of view is an important feature of the latest evolution in SEL.

The increased attention towards the socio-emotional skills' domain of broadening perspectives may reflect the economic and labor market contexts in the 21st century, in which educators

and students are increasingly aware that they have a limited understanding of the nature of jobs that children will encounter when they make a transition to work (World Economic Forum, 2016). In a way, our world increasingly requires individuals who are ready to reflect on and adapt to new circumstances rather than wait for instructions or resort to following the same routines. Some of the emerging and evidence-based SEL interventions, such as project-based learning (PBL) and experiential learning, are designed to cultivate creativity, critical thinking and openness to new ideas, while also emphasizing other important skills domains such as teamwork, self-confidence and organization. Moreover, there is a recognition that the purpose of traditional SEL interventions such as outdoor adventures and extra-curricular sports activities may have expanded beyond simply bonding and learning life skills, to include creativity, curiosity, and innovation (Fiennes et al., 2015).

These recent forms of SEL that are expanding and evolving in low-, middle-, and high-income countries have several common features. First, a critical mass of these interventions, including both targeted and universal types, is designed to empower vulnerable children and youth including those coming from low-income communities and violent neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, many of the targeted domains of socio-emotional skills (e.g., emotional resilience and self-esteem) are therefore very similar across these contexts. As a result, we frequently observe a common set of skill constructs adopted in conceptual frameworks, even if there are variations in how these skills are labelled, defined, and characterized. Secondly, we also observe common types of intervention programs that have track records, including growth-mindset, project-based learning (PBL), and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Thirdly, many of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools adopted by SEL programs involve, though not exclusively, ratings of students' socio-emotional skills based on self-reports and/or by others' reporting (for example, by teachers).

Despite these similarities across SEL programs, it is important to highlight the need to design programs to suit local contexts. First, frameworks must be carefully structured and labelled, building on local cultural norms, traditions, and priorities, but also on evidence for the theory of changes. This is arguably the only way to secure the stakeholders' buy-in. Second, intervention programs would also benefit from mobilizing locally contextualized design and activities, not only so that they are culturally appropriate but also so that they can maximize the level of learners' motivations and therefore program effectiveness. For instance, in Colombia, a program called Futbol Con Corazon chose football, a locally appropriate and motivating sport for most children and youth, to deliver an integrated learning methodology in SEL to foster peace building. Lastly, while I have mentioned that rating scales are commonly used to monitor and evaluate programs, the extent to which such metrics work also depends on contexts and culture. For example, if there are reasons to believe that students' self-reports are heavily influenced by context-specific factors such as modesty or acquiescence, it would be important to explore whether these metrics should be used or whether adjustments should be made to reduce the influence of these biases.

4 SEL in the future

It has been very encouraging to witness the increasing recognition of the importance of SEL among education stakeholders around the world. Moreover, the ways in which SEL is gradually becoming an integral part of the education system in countries such as the U.S. is something we can look forward to seeing in other countries in the future. Irrespective of whether many school jurisdictions around the world achieve system-wide integration of SEL, I anticipate the following aspects to be strengthened in the years to come:

The whole child: This notion has often been used in policy discussions to highlight the need to integrate socio-emotional skills in addition to cognitive or academic skills. However, the need to cover a wide set of children's socio-emotional skills has not always been well emphasized. As a result, there is a risk that school systems may focus on SEL programs that target a narrow set of socio-emotional skills of imminent priority (e.g., collaboration, teamworking, and empathy to promote peace).

There are two reasons why it is crucial to emphasize the value of developing the whole child with a wide range of socio-emotional as well as cognitive skills. The first comes from the fact that the objectives of education and training in school systems around the world are almost always diverse (e.g., to improve not only learning outcomes but also labor productivity, population health and sustainable development), and investing in children's multiple capabilities helps to address the multiplicity of societal objectives. The second reason is that skills are highly complementary to each other, such that an investment in one dimension of socio-emotional skills (e.g., empathy) will also help to leverage the investment made in another dimension (e.g., teamwork). In a way, the whole child is a powerful child who has a cross-fortified set of skills to face the challenges of future societies and to flourish by leveraging opportunities.

The whole learning environment: A significant proportion of existing SEL programs are school-based interventions. Trained teachers and a safe learning environment can play important roles in fostering children's socio-emotional skills. Yet schools are merely one of many important learning contexts in the SEL ecosystem. Home learning contexts can also play an important role in nurturing children's socio-emotional skills as well as complementing efforts made through school-based SEL interventions. Moreover, the wider community can also play an instrumental role in providing youth – especially those who would benefit from having surrogate parents – with a safe and warm haven to flourish.

The good news is that many of the existing school-based SEL intervention programs include some outreach elements to improve

parents' and caretakers' awareness of the efforts that schools are making, and ensuring that they will also provide a consistent environment at home. They include information sessions offered at schools, and school- or district-level websites that provide details of the SEL intervention programs and parental guidance notes. The challenge is that parents or caretakers who would benefit the most from better aligning the home environment are probably less likely to engage in these approaches. Schools and school systems would benefit from exploring complementary approaches such as community-based interventions (e.g., mentorship programs) to leverage additional support to improve the home and community learning environment.

Remote SEL: The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has prompted school systems across the world to shift to alternative learning modalities such as remote and blended learning. Teachers and instructors have made enormous efforts to develop and adapt instructional strategies to deliver the core curriculum using computers, TVs, radios, and packets of print materials to ensure learning does not stop. While some of these strategies allow for certain degrees of collaboration, interactions, and self-reflections between the instructors and students, many are not designed or suitable for SEL. Given the possibility that schools may have to rely more on alternative learning modalities even after the pandemic, it seems crucial to better understand the effectiveness and good practices of remote SEL delivery.

Remote teaching of SEL remains an unchartered territory. It is urgent to collate and analyse the effectiveness of different approaches to foster SEL in this important area. We must identify what works in remote SEL: when, for whom and why. While COVID-19 has brought considerable pain and misfortune to many learners and teachers from around the world, it provides an opportunity to learn from the efforts made to deliver SEL and do better. Like it or not, major disruptions may reoccur in the future. Schools and teachers are increasingly required to be ready to flexibly deliver remote learning activities. Understandably, much

of the effort to deliver remote or blended learning during this pandemic has been focused on the 'core curriculum'. Now that the pandemic is almost over, it would be a good moment to reflect on ways to remotely deliver SEL activities.

The diverse contributions in this volume reveal reformers around the world who believe in the powers of SEL to address the challenges facing education and the society. It is particularly promising to learn about all the ongoing innovations taking place in low- and middle-income countries to improve frameworks, better design interventions, enhance assessments, and build communities of practice. While these countries can use to their advantage decades of experience and evidence bases from countries that have already made considerable progress in SEL, there is still a lot of work ahead in preparing and delivering interventions that are optimized for the local environment. These efforts should be delivered in a collaborative fashion, involving not only the educators and researchers but also learners, policy makers, employers, and the wider civil society.

In all expectations, these efforts will pay off. I would argue that SEL is among the domains of education policies and practices that have the potential to bring the widest benefits to society. An increasing body of evidence points to the significant impact of socio-emotional skills not only on educational attainment and labour market outcomes but also on health, safety, civic engagement and well-being (OECD, 2015; Kautz et al., 2014). SEL is already drawing strong attention from decision makers working to improve labor market and social policies. SEL may also progressively become part of the policy instruments for decision makers working in the domains of health, public safety, and citizenship. The ongoing efforts made by educators and researchers from around the world to improve our understanding of SEL and strengthen the evidence base, such as those presented in this volume, will surely contribute to these directions.

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Introduction

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Global Briefs editors

As the 21st century begins to reveal its challenges, educators in many countries are searching for ways to equip children for our rapidly changing and unpredictable world. The imperative of equitable access to relevant, high quality education, for both girls and boys, has been recognized in the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for Quality Education. Moreover, the need for 'quality' to include learning to be a responsible citizen at local, national and global levels and to care for the environment has been spelled out in SDG Target 4.7.

> *By 2030, ensure all learners acquire 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.*

UNESCO has emphasized that achievement of these lofty aims not only requires exposure to cognitive learning, but also greater attention to the socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions. Quality education should include encouraging students to identify with and develop agency towards inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is thus central not only to personal development, as spelled out in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which almost every nation is signatory, but also to creating and sustaining viable futures for our societies and eco-systems.

With interest in social and emotional learning in very diverse countries growing, the theme of this third volume of NISSEM Global Briefs – social and emotional learning in different contexts – is both timely and meaningful. Research has linked SEL to positive outcomes in academic performance as well as to earnings and other aspects of adult life. UNESCO has recently brought together contemporary scholarship in *Rethinking Learning: a review of social and emotional learning for education systems* (UNESCO-MGIEP, 2020)[1]. The growth of interest, within the Global North as well as the Global South, is already leading to different interpretations of SEL, including sometimes complex and specialist terminology, and to the reinterpretation of existing learning aims and practices within SEL frameworks.

NISSEM, among others, has noted that culture and context are critical. SEL, by its very nature, draws upon the culture and context in which it is embedded – beginning with the social and the emotional in the home and school environments. NISSEM's mission is to help educators, especially in low and middle income countries, to design education materials that integrate SEL and its applications to life areas such as those listed in SDG Target 4.7. It will be neither desirable nor effective to use a model of SEL that is out of harmony with local culture and circumstance. Thus, to extend our awareness of different approaches to the integration of SEL into children's education in schools, we invited specialists from across the globe to offer their reflections on the challenges of strengthening the social and emotional dimension of learning in different contexts.

This new volume includes 13 papers by specialists from both the Global South and North. Several of them reference well known SEL frameworks, particularly that developed by the U.S.-based Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), founded in 1994. But all of them raise important points about the need for contextualization at a national and/or regional level. The approaches described here include discussion with family members as to what social and emotional values and behaviors are important to them, and similar discussions with

1 https://mgiep.unesco.org/rethinking-learning#:~:text=Rethinking%20Learning-,Rethinking%20Learning%3A%20A%20Review%20of%20Social%20and%20Emotional%20Learning%20for,school%20climate%20and%20its%20transformative

teachers and students. Interaction with organizations that have pioneered SEL in a national context provides important insights, while direct engagement of policy makers and specialists at ministries of education constitute further and critical entry points. Other papers discuss cross-cutting issues, notably gender, vulnerability, and crisis.

In his foreword, Koji Miyamoto introduces the topic of SEL through examining its evolution and importance in current international policy discourse. He notes that we frequently observe 'a common set of skill constructs' in the various initiatives, 'even if there are variations in how these skills are labelled, defined and characterized.' Indeed, SEL is often required for societal goals, as noted above, and appears in this volume under names relating to the individual such as 'resilience' and 'happiness'.

Most of our case studies address the question of how to identify the social and the emotional within different cultural contexts, and how to move forward to strengthening this component within schooling. A first approach is to look more closely at social and emotional expectations and values among parents, teachers and students. In his contribution to Global Briefs vol. I, Matthew Jukes described field studies with this objective conducted in rural Tanzania. Interviews with parents showed greater emphasis on respect for elders and obedience that in the CASEL formulation developed in North America. In the present volume, the paper by John Mugo and colleagues describes an approach based on household interviews, being developed by the Assessment of Life Skills and Values (ALiVE) program of the East African Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI). ALiVE teams from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania conducted a contextualization study involving 139 adolescents, 136 parents and 119 local experts in 30 villages across the region, 'yielding a culturally informed, internal understanding' of the social and emotional competences considered important within local values and prioritized life skills (a term that is used widely in the region as well as internationally, and which is akin to

SEL). Future surveys will focus specifically on problem solving, collaboration, self-awareness and respect.

Another approach to identifying social and emotional learning goals suited to specific cultures and contexts is to elicit the views of teachers. Suzuki and Kanzaki surveyed 32 teachers in Japanese high schools. The term 'SEL' is not widely used in Japan, but in terms of skills and values it is strongly represented in Japanese schools, from the morning meeting, serving lunch to each other and emphasis on collective well-being. Suzuki and Kanzaki propose a modified SEL framework that highlights interdependence, together with axes from individual to social and from the instant to the gradual, based on their coding and analysis of responses from the teacher survey.

The work of Suzuki and Kanzaki was part of an initiative led by Boston University's Scott Solberg and Lea Ferrari of the University of Padua, which aims to explore educators' perceptions of SEL skills and their impact on students' career development across 18 countries. The brief from Scoda and co-authors from Southeastern Europe, drawing on their contributions to this collaborative program, again contributes insights from teachers, exploring the respective understandings of resilience across 252 educators from Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Romania. Concepts such as developing confidence, dealing with failure and coping with intense emotions (in the case of students whose parents work abroad) featured in teachers' responses, in forms related to culture and context. Marsay and colleagues from Uganda, South Africa, Togo and Burkina Faso likewise present teacher perceptions of students' need to develop self-management, self-regulation and relationship skills, including task-oriented relational leadership.

An important study of cognitive and non-cognitive learning in India is presented by Vyjayanthi Sankar, reporting findings on school climate, as perceived by students, teachers and school principals, as part of a wider study. The questionnaire was read aloud to students in grades 4 and 5, who entered their responses on a work sheet, while students in grades 7 and 9 responded to

written questionnaires. The findings indicated worrying student reports of physical or verbal abuse from peers or teachers. An attentiveness measure correlated with school climate and higher academic skills. More such studies that include student perceptions are sorely needed.

Beyond surveys of families, teachers and students, the process of identifying context-based SEL frameworks can draw on the expertise of organizations already engaged in this area. In Peru, a collaborative emerged in 2020, comprising some 100 public, private and international institutions within and beyond the formal education sector. Cardoso and Urrutia's brief describes this Community of Practice, coordinated by a team from UNESCO, Notre Dame University and Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University, which has 'enabled discussion of approaches to SEL as an entry point to understand the link that unites child and adolescent development with education and facilitated the sharing of reference frameworks around measurement tools, educational practices and lessons from programs related to SEL.' Emergent SEL dimensions are the intercultural, territorial (rural/urban), the life stage approach and the systemic, with sub-groups focused on advocacy, practice and evaluation.

Another point of entry is through collaboration with the national education ministry and other stakeholders. Roxane Caires and colleagues describe a systematic process for developing a SEL framework aligned to the culture and context of contemporary Lebanon, jointly with the MOE in Lebanon. Although the notion of SEL is relatively new, several frameworks have emerged within the country. These were shared by the MOE and the Center for Education Research and Development (CERD) through an Evidence Exchange workshop organised by World Learning and NYU-TIES, followed by an analytical process that led to new frameworks.

Bailey and colleagues describe an initiative for SEL in early grade schooling, working at sub-national level with the support of the Department of Education of Rio de Janeiro State in Brazil. The project aims to contextualize short SEL 'kernels' developed

at Harvard's Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL) Lab. A first step was focus group discussions with parents and teachers from 15 early childhood centers. Culturally adapted 'kernels' were then developed, taking note of the national curriculum framework and 'fields of experience', notably 'Myself, the Other, Ourselves', and piloted prior to planned introduction in the State.

Ideally, the political will to introduce context-related SEL into the curriculum is strengthening and gaining supporters. Das and colleagues explain concisely and powerfully how social tensions and challenges in India have made it urgent to examine what the education sector can contribute to addressing issues of happiness and well-being. They describe how years of exploratory work came to fruition when a new government in Delhi decided to upgrade education facilities and to introduce a social and emotional morning lesson known as Happiness Curriculum, including mindfulness, stories and activities, and student expression. The authors note that 'Delhi's Happiness Curriculum is an amalgamation of a localized and contextualized understanding of happiness and its significance in the Indian context, with SEL competencies as outlined in Western frameworks.' Extensive teacher training and awareness-raising, together with preparation of teacher handbooks, and above all, strong governmental support, enabled the introduction of this program at scale.

These briefs have illustrated ways of developing culturally adapted SEL frameworks and programs, through work with parents, teachers, students, stakeholder groups and education departments. Further briefs address cross-cutting issues including gender, vulnerability and response to crisis, and illustrate the role of research and advocacy in raising global awareness of the needs of specific groups of students. Yorke and colleagues describe research into the importance of SEL for girls' education and gender equality in Ethiopia. This research helps strengthen awareness of the SEL needs of adolescent girls in Ethiopian schools – in this case, through focus group discussions with students attending the

girls' club in five school and community sites, and the associated teachers, in order to understand the social, emotional and practical supports that girls' clubs provide to female students. The research team also report on students' activities during Covid, finding that rural female students were most likely to be helping at home and less likely to continue learning.

Cefai discusses the SEL needs of children in vulnerable personal circumstances. 'Universal SEL', for all students in the class, can benefit vulnerable children, without stigma, and may be designed to ensure that they are helped. Cefai concludes that more research is needed to determine how the effect of SEL universal interventions is moderated by such factors as gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability. He notes that children experiencing difficulties, particularly those with more complex and chronic social and emotional needs, may need additional support involving various professionals besides teachers.

Bailey (in a second paper to which she contributed) and colleagues describe an inter-agency collaboration on SEL and psychosocial support (PSS) for children affected by trauma such as armed conflict and disasters. The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)'s PSS-SEL Collaborative and the EASEL Lab are working together to produce an online, interactive PSS-SEL Toolbox with resources that increase understanding and coordination in the field. The Toolbox includes information from 70 PSS-SEL frameworks and other guiding documents developed and used in global education in emergencies settings, with the specific SEL skills and features of well-being that they include. The Toolbox also includes Localizing Tools to support stakeholders to gather local input and use the data to inform work in their own context, and field testing is planned in 16 sites.

NISSEM's particular focus, on education materials that embody SEL as content and pedagogy, is reflected in several of the briefs. The Happiness Curriculum in Delhi is built around teacher handbooks that set out procedures, stories, activities, and student reflection, which teachers had not learned about in prior years. The

SEL 'kernels' being piloted in Brazil are based on guidance cards which went through several iterations to achieve contextualization and work well for the teachers. Musallam and colleagues' brief describes how, since its foundation in 1994, the Lebanese NGO Ana Aqra (*I read*) grew from school library provision to remedial literacy, and then to SEL and the production of supportive materials for use in the schools they support and elsewhere. There is much scope for the type of work described. NISSEM plans to work collaboratively with educators from different grade levels and subject disciplines to find ways of conveying SEL skills and embedding SEL pedagogy, contextualized through collaborative processes similar to many that are described in this volume, into textbooks and other education materials that can help with the teaching and learning needed for the challenges of the 21st century.

We trust that the wealth of experience brought to bear on the contextualization of SEL in different national settings in this volume will assist readers who seek to strengthen the SEL component in specific school contexts and cultures. There are diverse possible points of intervention, including: consultations with students, families and teachers; consulting and collaborating with organizations already engaged in SEL activities within the country; research studies that highlight strengths, gaps and potential solutions; and engagement with governments to show the value and utility of contextualized SEL.

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Developing contextualized assessment tools for life skills and values in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Launched in August 2020, the Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) project seeks to catalyze the education systems of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to focus on life skills and values. This will be achieved through developing contextualized, open-sourced assessment tools, conducting a large-scale assessment among adolescents aged 13–17, using the evidence to raise public awareness and advocate for system focus, and strengthening local capabilities to assess the complex competences, while nurturing the agency of local experts to amplify voice at the global level. First, a year-long consultative process conducted with members of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) arrived at 'values and life skills' as the way to refer to these competences in context and prioritized the measurement of problem solving, collaboration, self-awareness and respect. Second, ALiVE conducted a contextualization study involving 139 adolescents, 136 parents and 119 local experts in 30 villages across the region, yielding a culturally informed, internal understanding of the competences. Third, a lengthy tool development process was adopted to accommodate the development of local capacities. This article presents the contribution of ALiVE to the global SEL conversation, specifically on the 'why' and 'how to' in contextualizing SEL in varied global contexts.

Développer des outils d'évaluation contextualisés pour les compétences et les valeurs de la vie courante au Kenya, en Tanzanie et en Ouganda

Lancé en août 2020, le projet d'évaluation des compétences et des valeurs de la vie courante en Afrique de l'Est (ALiVE) vise à catalyser les systèmes éducatifs du Kenya, de la Tanzanie et de l'Ouganda pour qu'ils se concentrent sur les compétences et les valeurs de la vie courante. Pour ce faire, des outils d'évaluation contextualisés et en libre accès seront développés, une évaluation à grande échelle sera menée auprès d'adolescents âgés de 13 à 17 ans, les résultats seront utilisés pour sensibiliser le public et plaider en faveur de l'orientation du système, et les capacités locales seront renforcées pour évaluer les compétences complexes, tout en encourageant les experts locaux à se faire entendre au niveau mondial.

Tout d'abord, un processus consultatif d'un an mené avec les membres de l'initiative régionale d'apprentissage en éducation (RELI) a abouti à la définition de 'valeurs et compétences de vie' comme moyen de se référer à ces compétences dans le contexte et a donné la priorité à la mesure de la résolution de problèmes, de la collaboration, de la conscience de soi et du respect.

Deuxièmement, ALiVE a mené une étude de contextualisation impliquant 139 adolescents, 136 parents et 119 experts locaux dans 30 villages de la région, ce qui a permis d'obtenir une compréhension interne des compétences, culturellement informée.

Troisièmement, un long processus de développement de l'outil a été adopté pour tenir compte du développement des capacités locales. Cet article présente la contribution d'ALiVE à la conversation globale sur l'ASE, en particulier sur le 'pourquoi' et

le ‘comment’ de la contextualisation de l’ASE dans des contextes mondiaux variés.

Desarrollando herramientas de evaluación contextualizadas para las habilidades y valores para la vida en Kenia, Tanzania y Uganda

Lanzado en agosto de 2020, el proyecto de Evaluación de Habilidades y Valores para la Vida en África Oriental (ALiVE, por sus siglas en inglés) busca catalizar los sistemas educativos de Kenia, Tanzania y Uganda para que se centren en las habilidades y valores para la vida. Esto se logrará mediante el desarrollo de herramientas de evaluación contextualizadas y de código abierto, la realización de una evaluación a gran escala entre adolescentes de 13 a 17 años, el uso de evidencias para aumentar la conciencia pública y abogar por el enfoque del sistema, y el fortalecimiento de las capacidades locales para evaluar competencias complejas, nutriendo, en el proceso, la capacidad de expertos y expertas locales de amplificar su voz a nivel global. En primer lugar, se llevó a cabo un proceso consultivo de un año de duración con miembros de la Iniciativa Regional de Aprendizaje en Educación (RELI, por sus siglas en inglés), el cual acordó ‘valores y habilidades para la vida’ como la forma de referirse a estas competencias y priorizó la medición de la resolución de problemas, la colaboración, la autoconciencia y el respeto. En segundo lugar, ALiVE llevó a cabo un estudio de contextualización en el que participaron 139 adolescentes, 136 padres y 119 personas expertas locales en 30 pueblos de la región, lo que permitió obtener una comprensión interna y culturalmente informada de las competencias. En tercer lugar, se adoptó un largo proceso de desarrollo de herramientas para dar cabida al desarrollo de las capacidades locales. Este artículo presenta la contribución de ALiVE a la conversación global sobre SEL, específicamente sobre el ‘por qué’ y el ‘cómo’ de la contextualización de SEL en diversos contextos globales.

Introduction

The last few years have witnessed exponential growth in interest in social emotional learning competences across the world. Several global initiatives have either been concluded in the recent past or are still underway, targeted at increased understanding of these competences. Most consistent across these interventions has been the focus on the definition and prioritization of the competences for the various education levels and contexts, generation of knowledge on what works, and the development of assessments to measure and track progress.

Seemingly, there is emerging consensus that unlike other foundational competences like literacy and numeracy, social emotional competences are more understood and produced in local context. Various studies have documented differences in the social relationships and emotional relationships as culturally-embedded. A few of the studies have noted that most definitions of social and emotional competences have been developed in Western contexts, with a tendency to generalize these to (or even impose them on) non-Western contexts.

These critiques have yielded varied efforts to contextualize the frameworks in varied contexts. However, even these attempts have been criticized for carrying unnecessary Western burdens, often starting from the Western concepts and methods and using these as the basis for contextualization, without adequate examination and understanding of the different contexts where this is applied.

Second, the application of these competences to non-Western contexts has hardly produced transfer of capacities. Concern has been raised that SEL expertise has rested with experts in the West, with little investment in developing the capacities elsewhere. This asymmetry of capacity has been in itself a block to contextualization, in that the people who understand the competences in their contexts are rarely the ones who write and publish about them.

The Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) is a project launched in August 2020. This is a collaborative initiative

established by members of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. ALiVE seeks to catalyze the focus of the education systems in the three countries to focus on nurturing and measuring life skills and values, so as to equip students with these competences. First, the project seeks to develop contextualized, open-sourced tools and use these to conduct household-based assessments among adolescents aged 13–17, use the evidence to raise awareness among parents, teachers and children of the value of these competences and to drive policy advocacy, as well as use the tool development process itself as a learning space for the strengthening of local expertise on SEL measurement, while amplifying the voice of African experts in global advocacy.

This brief shares the three principal elements of ALiVE in respect to contextualization – the contextualized understanding of competences, adapting assessment to the local context, and embedding a capacity strengthening approach in tool development.

Contextualized understanding of competences

The contextualization process went through three phases. First, RELI members examined the constructs that have been used to refer to the competences across varied global contexts, including, among others, 21st century skills, soft skills, transferrable and transversal competences, and social and emotional learning. Considering the need to simplify and align the constructs to the concepts used in the education systems across the three countries, it was concluded that values and life skills (VaLi) was what would resonate most in the context of East Africa. The concept of VaLi was validated and adopted. While values are notably deprioritized (even ignored) in Western literature, VaLi members maintained that these were as critical as the life skills, and that they would also be carried along in the measurement and interventions.

Second, the Values and Life Skills thematic cluster in RELI conducted a review of the definitions and prioritization of these

competences across the three countries, and documented the competences defined in the national curricula as well as those prioritized by interventions. While the prioritization was similar across the three countries, there were a few intricate differences. For instance, while all three countries prioritized problem-solving (and decision-making) in the cognitive domain, they varied in the domain of *self*, with Kenya prioritizing self-efficacy, Tanzania prioritizing self-awareness and Uganda prioritizing self-management. A series of negotiation meetings agreed that a regional focus would be important and arrived at the three life skills and one value, to start with: problem-solving, collaboration, self-awareness and respect.

Third, a combination of contextualization studies and review of global literature was adopted to yield both deep and extensive understanding of the prioritized competences. The contextualization study comprised 15 districts across the three countries. These districts were purposively sampled to represent East Africa's varied contexts – large cities and smaller urban centers, rural agricultural and rural pastoralist (arid) areas, as well as lake and coastal communities, including smaller fishing communities. Ethnographic methodologies were adopted to explore how the constructs were defined and understood by adolescents, their parents and other local experts who worked with adolescents – including teachers, catechists, youth patrons and matrons in religious communities and social workers.

The results of this study were compared with the results of an extensive review of global literature on the three life skills. In summary, the contextualized understandings differed slightly from the definitions in literature, especially on aspects of the social-relational components of the competences. For instance, consulting someone emerged as a step in the process of problem-solving, in addition to steps defined in global literature including understanding the problem, gathering information, generating a variety of solutions, prioritizing, and applying the solution. In the same way, self-awareness was defined as both an internalized

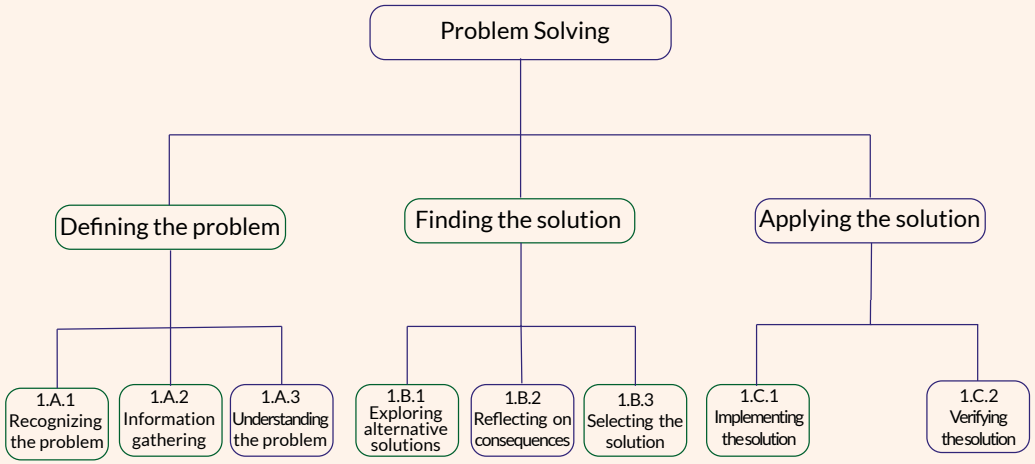

Figure 1: Problem-solving skill structure

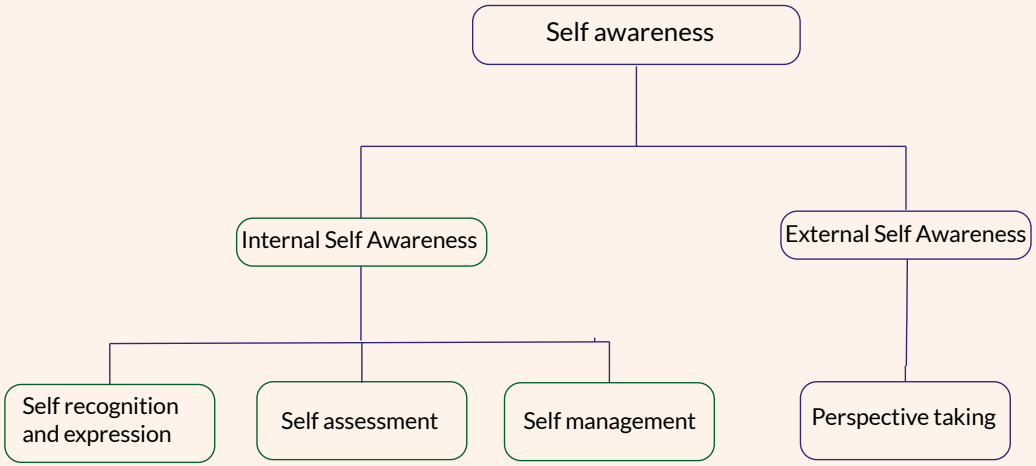

Figure 2: Self-awareness skill structure[1]

and externalized competence that involves a balance between how you understand yourself and how this understanding mirrors your interaction with others.

Fourth, a team of around 45 collaborators (the regional tool development panels) took over these contextualized understandings. Working with an external facilitator over a period of almost a one year, the team finalized the contextualized definitions and used these to develop the skill structures and assessment frameworks for the competences. It is hoped that the skill structures and frameworks will be compared back and used to inform the existing global frameworks and contribute to the global conversation on SEL frameworks.

Preference for household-based assessment

A second contribution of the ALiVE process will be alignment to the 'leave no one behind' principle. A quick scan indicates that most (if not all) existing SEL evidence has been generated from children in school and classroom contexts. Considering this, VaLi members agreed that starting from a school-based assessment would miss several opportunities. First, at least a third of the adolescents in East Africa are either not attending school or are attending alternative learning and training institutions not conventionally defined as school, including vocational training and apprenticeship. A school-based assessment would then not tell the whole story, and would miss the analytical opportunity of estimating the contribution that schooling makes to the accumulation of these competences. Second, values and life skills are acquired first from home (and substantially formed in pre-school years), then complemented at school. A household assessment would create the connection to the home environment and contribute to parental engagement and awareness.

Third, assessing at home rather than at school would create a free environment for everyone (including teachers in the community) to engage in conversations about these competences, free from exam-oriented pressure in schools. For instance, it may be difficult to differentiate the ALiVE assessment from all the other tests

1 In figures 1 and 2, the color green denotes the skills and sub-skills prioritized for measurement.

and assessments happening within the school environment, and potentially create conflation that would inhibit independent public conversation about the meaning and worth of these competences, and the potential roles of everyone in nurturing these.

While the choice for a household assessment looks rational, it also posed various challenges. First, the theoretical challenge. The project ultimately seeks to influence the system to focus on producing these competences throughout the schooling system. Beginning from home is a rather long route to this destination and may require potential coupling with school- and classroom-focused intervention. Second, household assessments carry the logistical burden of reaching out to a scattered target population instead of just meeting them in one place. Third, while teachers may find it easier to pay attention to such a process because of its connection to what they do on a daily basis, parents have many competing priorities and do not always see educating children as their responsibility.

To navigate these, ALiVE will draw lessons from and build on the citizen-led assessments conducted on foundational literacy and numeracy across varied contexts in the global South, among them the Uwezo learning assessment. Unlike these assessments, however, assessing values and life skills may be problematic in the level of expertise needed to assess the complex competences, which may potentially render the use of citizen volunteers either untenable or inadequate. On influencing the system, it is hoped that ALiVE will continue to explore and integrate work tracks for direct engagement with the Ministries of Education as well as the national curriculum and assessment institutes in the respective countries, with the possibility of conducting a pilot for a system-focused national assessment of values and life skills. These explorations will also include the possibility of assessing younger age for better pipeline understanding on when and where these competences are accumulated, and better conception of the spaces available to make the needed difference.

Embedded capacity strengthening

To address the gap of inadequate SEL capacities in East Africa, a lengthy process of tool development was adopted and created as an elaborate space for learning. First, mapping was conducted of local experts and SEL enthusiasts in the region. A google sheet was created, with close to 70 persons known to have worked on values and life skills. A number of these were based in the national curriculum and examinations institutes of the three respective countries, while others included academics and independent consultants who had either studied or participated in varied initiatives and interventions. Assessment of this list was conducted, looking at the skills mixture and interests necessary for the collaborative development of contextualized tools. For each country, a shortlist of around 10–15 participants was generated, including assessment experts, psychologists and psychometricians, practicing teachers and creatives. A call was also made to the members of the Values and Life Skills thematic cluster of RELI to participate in the tool development, with clearly stated time investments extending to at least 40 weeks. Over 10 members of the cluster stepped forward to this challenge. The technical panel was formally constituted, including a community of 47 learner-experts. An external facilitator – Professor Esther Care of the University of Melbourne – was engaged to lead the process.

The learning process flowed through a series of five workshops, connecting the panels in the three countries and oscillating between blended and virtual sessions as driven by the COVID-19 situation in each country. To allow for learning, the style of work involved getting introduced to a specific aspect by the facilitator, retreating to work on it, and receiving questions and reviews from the facilitator to refine the aspects of tool development. Given the similarities observed during contextualization, it was agreed that cross-country teams would be formed to focus on specific skills, each country taking leadership of a skill but having representatives from the other two countries. Tanzania took the lead on self-

awareness, Uganda on problem-solving, and Kenya on both collaboration and respect (owing to a larger number of members in the technical panel).

The first workshop focused on reaching the major agreements like the purpose of the assessment, identifying the national curriculum materials that would help in developing the assessment tasks, and understanding the process of developing the skills descriptions. In workshop two, the teams worked through refining the skill structures, fine-tuning the principles and concept domains. Workshop three focused on developing the assessment framework, identifying the assessable elements of each skill, and moving these all through to define the assessment for each element. During this workshop, performance tasks and test items were developed, and the team introduced participants to the Think Aloud methodology of conducting pre-test for these complex competences. Workshop four looked at the results of the Think Aloud and used the results to revise and re-write the test items. A pilot exercise was conducted, and the tasks and items were selected and finalized.

This process of developing contextualized tools has reaped much success in the learning approach. Learning through doing has been a powerful experience. Through such intensive working sessions, the process has connected tightly to each other the local experts working on these competences in the three countries, creating a strong foundation for regional interventions. Thirdly, the inclusion of government officers from the ministries of education and national curriculum and assessment institutes not only strengthens the capacities of the system, but also establishes bonds that may be useful for policy advocacy once the evidence has been generated.

However, the learning through doing approach has also exprienced several challenges. Working through the COVID-19 period has lengthened the hours of working and led to extensive exhaustion from working many hours online. The allocation of country leadership for each skill was an adaptation that enabled some people to work in an in-person session and lessen the fatigue. A second challenge is cost. Holding five workshops with 47 participants has been very expensive. Luckily, the number of virtual sessions across the region significantly brought down the cost. It has also been costly to secure the time of such a large number of participants over eight months, though also extremely rewarding. Fourth, the Think Aloud method never worked very well. It was realized that the Think Aloud method was better suited for literacy-rich populations and print-based assessments and is very problematic for an oral assessment like ALiVE.

Overall, we agree with Mathew Jukes in his insistence on ground-up contextualization[2], noting that commitment by local experts and availability of resources to support the process are extremely necessary. Moving forward, the process will flow to a dry run and graduation/certification of the tool developers early in 2022, followed by conducting the household assessments by mid-year and launching the report by the end of 2022. A regional conference on values and life skills is planned for early 2023 as the climax of sharing and celebrating this work with the global SEL community of friends.

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2

Cultural translation of SEL to Japanese educational contexts: Teachers' perspectives on cultivating SEL competencies

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes cultural translation of social and emotional learning (SEL) framework to Japanese educational contexts. We believe that it is particularly important to take our cultural and social contexts into considerations when we conduct and apply psychological research. As a part of multinational research project on SEL, we looked at Japanese high school teachers' perceptions on SEL in their classroom. Reflecting their views on SEL, we created a quadrant diagram of SEL framework with two axes – the horizontal axis as temporal characteristics (*instant* and *gradual*) and the vertical axis as relational characteristics (*society* and *individual*) – and with interdependent cultural value on its center and educational systems on its outer. The nature and the process of this multinational research project made us realize the importance of having open dialogues among researchers, empowering those who are often unheard, and taking both global and local considerations in psychological research and applications to further advance psychological science and human welfare.

Traduction culturelle de l'ASE dans les contextes éducatifs japonais : Le point de vue des enseignants sur le développement des compétences ASE

Ce chapitre décrit la transposition culturelle du cadre de l'apprentissage social et émotionnel (ASE) aux contextes éducatifs japonais. Nous pensons qu'il est particulièrement important de prendre en compte nos contextes culturels et sociaux lorsque nous menons et appliquons des recherches en psychologie. Dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche multinational sur l'apprentissage social et émotionnel, nous avons étudié la perception qu'ont les enseignants du secondaire japonais de l'apprentissage social et émotionnel dans leurs classes. En reflétant leurs points de vue sur l'ASE, nous avons créé un diagramme en quadrants du cadre ASE avec deux axes – l'axe horizontal représentant les caractéristiques temporelles (instantané et graduel) et l'axe vertical les caractéristiques relationnelles (société et individu) – et avec une valeur culturelle interdépendante au centre et des systèmes éducatifs à l'extérieur. La nature et le processus de ce projet de recherche multinational nous ont fait prendre conscience de l'importance d'avoir des dialogues ouverts entre les chercheurs, de donner du pouvoir à ceux qui ne sont souvent pas entendus et de prendre en compte les considérations globales et locales dans la recherche et les applications en psychologie afin de faire progresser la science psychologique et le bien-être humain.

Traducción cultural de SEL en contextos educativos japoneses: Perspectivas de docentes sobre fomento de competencias SEL

Este capítulo describe la traducción cultural del marco del aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) en contextos educativos japoneses. Creemos que es especialmente importante tener en cuenta contextos culturales y sociales cuando llevamos a cabo investigaciones sobre psicología. Como parte de un

proyecto de investigación internacional sobre SEL, examinamos las percepciones de los y las docentes de secundaria japoneses sobre SEL en sus aulas. Reflejando sus puntos de vista sobre SEL, creamos un diagrama de cuadrantes del marco SEL con dos ejes – el eje horizontal incluye características temporales (instantáneo y gradual) y el eje vertical incluye características relacionales (sociedad e individuo) – y con un valor cultural interdependiente en el centro y los sistemas educativos en su exterior. La naturaleza y el proceso de este proyecto de investigación internacional nos hizo darnos cuenta de la importancia de mantener diálogos abiertos entre investigadores, empoderar a aquellas personas que a menudo no son tenidas en cuenta y considerar tanto las opiniones globales como las locales en la investigación psicológica y sus aplicaciones para seguir avanzando en la ciencia psicológica y el bienestar humano.

Cultural and social influences on psychological processes

Each society, or country, has its own unique cultural, socio-political, and historical backgrounds, and we wonder if a conceptual framework of a psychological process developed in one society can be brought and applied in another society with only linguistic translation. Some psychological processes may be considered universal, which means that they apply to all human beings, while other psychological processes may be considered culturally specific, which means people's behaviors depend on the culture that they live in. For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) have suggested that the development of self-construal is largely influenced by the culture the person lives in, and while people in non-Western cultures tend to have interdependent construal of the self, people in Western cultures tend to have independent construal of the self. With this example, we can assume that developing a self-construal is largely a universal phenomenon, whereas the kinds of self-construal one develops may vary and depend on the cultural backgrounds.

In fact, it has been criticized that much of the psychological research in top journals is conducted with a particular sample population yet draws conclusions as if a particular psychological process is a universal phenomenon. This criticism is widely known as a WEIRD problem, which stands for Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic, suggesting that the field of psychology is strongly dominated by research with WEIRD samples. Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) reviewed work in various domains of psychology and compared the work on WEIRD samples with that on other populations, concluding that samples from WEIRD societies are not representative of all human beings. It is worthwhile to note, however, that some psychological processes, such as theory of mind, are found to be strikingly similar across populations (Henrich et al., 2010).

Considering that cultural and social backgrounds may influence many of our psychological processes and behaviors and that there may be no such thing as a fully universal psychological phenomenon, it is particularly important to pay attention to how we interpret terms that we use in psychological research, especially in cross-cultural research. Nowadays, we have access to much research conducted outside of our countries, and for many of us, those findings, which are based on WEIRD samples, may not apply entirely to people in our societies. Van de Vijver (2013) discussed the importance of internationalization in psychology to make the discipline 'more culture-informed, inclusive, and globally applicable' (p.761–62). We urge that we, as researchers, consistently examine our cultural beliefs and biases that may influence our research and understandings of human behaviors.

SEL and Japanese classroom systems

Social and emotional learning (SEL), originally developed in the United States, is a learning process that is considered essential for all people to learn and navigate for themselves in order to live healthily with other people in this society (CASEL, 2021). SEL is considered by many to be composed of five key areas of

competences – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2021). The concept of SEL has been brought to Japan, and some researchers have been applying its concepts in Japanese schools and classrooms (e.g., SEL-8, 2021; JSEL, 2021).

Before describing SEL in Japanese educational systems, let us first describe Japanese educational and social contexts. Firstly, it has been traditionally thought that students learn to become social beings from spending so much time in a classroom. A classroom in Japanese schools is often regarded as a place not only for learning but also for living (Kishino, 2020). In elementary school, students spend all day in the same classroom, from the time they enter school in the morning until the time they leave. It is usual that students have a morning meeting together to start the day, eat lunch together, and clean the room together. Also, the students receive lessons from the single teacher assigned to the classroom. As students move up the grades, they have more opportunities to learn from subject specialists, but a classroom is still considered an important unit for living their school-life together. Japan has a history of having popularized school education by reflecting the idea of a community in a classroom (Satow, 1991); thus, the idea of positioning the classroom as the foundation of collective life remains strong.

Secondly, the emphasis is placed on the sameness and the collectiveness of students in Japanese schools, unlike in some other countries where all students are considered different and valued for their individuality. Students are expected to behave in a certain way and relate to each other in a certain way (Akagi, 2017). Therefore, the diverse backgrounds of the children, such as race, social class, or family environment, are often put aside in favor of many school rules on behaviors, personal appearance, and human relations. For instance, some schools regulate hair length and style and forbid students to be in a relationship with another student. Although, recently, many schools have been reconsidering these rules, Japanese schools have a history of eliminating diversity and striving for equality by establishing school rules. Because of this

strong emphasis on collectiveness, there is a possibility of a student being excluded from their community, if the student cannot 'read the air', behave similarly, and fit in.

Thirdly, Japanese educators – in addition to their role as a classroom/subject teacher – often take the role of nurturing human relationships in a classroom. It is common for teachers to handle problems related to a student's truancy and other psychological problems, and only to consult and refer to school counselors and social workers when more specialized support is needed. Since teachers in Japanese schools are responsible for the psychological care of students, they take some psychology courses during their teacher training in college. Sometimes Japanese teachers are viewed as lacking psychological knowledge and expertise to provide that kind of emotional support; on the other hand, we can take teachers providing psychological support as an asset to a Japanese classroom.

A study on teachers' perspectives on SEL in classrooms

The International Research Network on SEL, led by Scott V. Solberg, PhD, at Boston University and Lea Ferrari, PhD, at the University of Padua, is a multinational research project to investigate social and emotional learning from career readiness perspectives across the globe. The initial reason that we, the Japanese team, decided to join the project was because their proposal included the step where researchers from each country qualitatively investigate the meanings of SEL to – and its applications by – educators in school settings. Educational contexts and curriculum vary from one society to another; thus, it makes sense to clarify how the term is understood and used in each society in order to conduct a cross-cultural research study. The term SEL is neither popular in Japanese society nor widely used in the curriculum, but we wondered about the possibility of Japanese teachers nurturing students' so-called SEL skills in their classrooms. Thus, we were interested in

examining Japanese teachers' perspectives on the descriptions of each category of SEL and how they develop students' SEL skills.

In Japan, graduation from both elementary school and lower secondary school is requirement-based, which means that as long as students complete the required courses, they graduate from school even if they don't have enough academic skills or social skills. Under such a situation, more than 98% of junior high school graduates go to high school. This implies that, although there are exceptions, many high school teachers are expected to take care of students with various levels of academic and social skills. Taking this contextual factor into consideration, we decided to target high school (10th–12th grade) teachers as our sample.

Our sample consisted of 32 high school teachers, 23 of whom worked full-time while 9 worked part-time. Among the 23 full-time teachers, 12 worked at public high schools and 11 worked at private high schools. Among the 9 part-time teachers, 8 worked at public high schools and 1 at a private high school. Nine teachers knew about SEL, 10 had heard a little about SEL, and 13 did not know about SEL. In the questionnaire, first, we described each of the SEL areas of competence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making) and asked how they nurture each competence in their subject instruction and student guidance when the teachers envision students' future career paths. Then, we asked how teachers' SEL skills can enhance their teaching and relationships with students. We were especially careful with the phrasing of the questions so that teachers who had not heard about SEL could answer the questions.

Translation of the SEL framework to Japanese classrooms

What we saw in teachers' answers on how to nurture each SEL competency was that even if they did not know the term SEL, they were aware of the importance of nurturing students' skills to gain understandings about themselves, to recognize other

perspectives than their own, and to build good relationships with each other. One critical issue that we would like to point out is that our participants described similar attitudes and skills across five areas and included many specific examples. In other words, they eloquently elaborated on how they perceive SEL competences and how they nurture those competencies with students, even though the words they used were not exactly the same as those described or categorized in the CASEL model. We also saw many answers that reflected Japanese classrooms and cultural values. This really made us think about how we present the data – one possibility was to strictly use the CASEL language and model, and another was to use 'their' (i.e. the teachers') language.

We, the Japanese team, wanted to respect how teachers work in the Japanese educational systems and classrooms and how they already provide psychological care and support students' well-being alongside curriculum instruction. Additionally, we thought that various teachers using similar words and concepts to describe different areas of SEL competences reflected Japanese teachers' perceptions of SEL, which are somewhat different from the original model. Thus, we decided to code all the data together, without using the original competence categories, to see if we could find new ways to categorize the codes and to use teachers' language to describe the codes. By doing so, we hoped to be able to translate the SEL framework to align with the current instruction atmosphere in classroom settings, to empower teachers and their expertise by using their own words, and potentially to make it easier for teachers to understand the concepts of SEL, if the model were to be introduced to the teachers in the future.

After having identified 57 codes with open coding, we grouped the codes into categories and the categories into groups. We repeated this process several times until all of the team agreed with the 16 categories and 6 groups. Then, we discussed the meanings of each group and their relation to each other, with consideration to teachers' responses, and drew a diagram to capture the meanings and relationships of the groups. A few

examples from 57 codes, all 16 categories, and all 6 groups are listed in Table 1 and the diagram is presented in Figure 1.

First, many of the teachers' answers, whether directly or indirectly, connoted the notion of interdependence – how people are related to each other and how people live with others; thus, we placed 'interdependence' in the center of the diagram. Next, we placed two axes: the horizontal represents temporal characteristics. Some attitudes and skills (for example, the codes 'executing a plan' and 'anger management') are required to deal with the situation at the moment, while other attitudes and skills (for example, 'empathy' and 'thinking about the future') are required to deal with situations foreseen as coming or with life in general. We have labeled the former (left side of the axis) *instant* and the latter (right side of the axis) *gradual*. The vertical axis represents

Code (selection of examples)	Category	Group
• Setting goals • Coordinating different opinions • Creating safe spaces • Knowing rules and manners • Recognizing self in relation to others • Walking in someone's shoes • Finding own roles • Verbalization • Sensitivity • Reflection • Diligence • Awareness of own assumptions • Individualized response • Accompanying • Collaborating with other professionals • Playing multiple roles	Planning	Management
	Viewing the whole	
	Spontaneity	
	Moral	
	New perspectives	Perspectives
	Affirmation	
	Self-awareness	
	Expression	Representation
	Controlling emotions	
	Reflection	Reflection & Future Direction
	Future direction	
	Interdependence	Interdependence
	Individuality	Education
	Dialogue	
	Multidisciplinary	
	Support	

Table 1: List of codes, categories, and groups

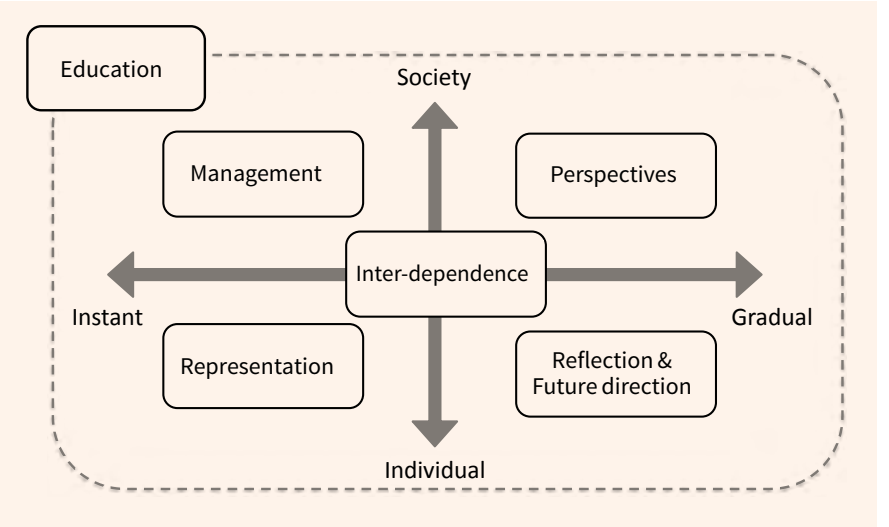

Figure 1: Translated model of SEL

relational characteristics. Some attitudes and skills (for example, 'respecting others' autonomy' and 'accepting others') are valued so that students can live in harmony with others in a society, while other attitudes and skills (for example, 'stress management' and 'resilience') are valued so that students can live their own life fully. We have labeled the former (top side of the axis) *society* and the latter (bottom side of the axis) *individual*. We placed groups that contained more codes that align with each characteristic of the axes in the quadrant. Lastly, since most of the teachers' answers relate to their teaching and students' life, we placed the 'education' to embrace all other groups.

We would like to mention here that we do not see this as a reconstruction of a theoretical SEL framework, but rather, we see it as a translation of the theoretical SEL framework defined by CASEL (2021) to a conceptual model that fits Japanese cultural and educational contexts. In Japan, some programs to foster SEL skills among students have been developed, so that teachers can use them in their classrooms; however, it is sometimes

difficult to introduce new programs when teachers already have demanding workloads. Therefore, we wanted to introduce a model based on teachers' knowledge and experiences, which can connect the theoretical framework of SEL with the current curriculum instruction and guidance counseling in Japanese educational systems.

Internationalization of psychology

We would like to conclude the chapter with three points that we learned from participating in the International Research Network on SEL and an analysis of the Japanese teachers' views on SEL.

First, the field of psychology can only truly develop as a discipline through open dialogues among researchers. Our initial emphasis on perspectives on SEL being unique to each country reflected how this multinational research project began with each country defining its own teachers' perspectives of SEL. Having codes on how teachers perceive SEL from multiple countries with different cultural and educational contexts, and having discussions on what each code means to each country, made it possible for us to see our country's results through our cultural lens, to give unique meanings to the results, and to realize the assets and shortcomings of our educational systems. One example is that we could see how themes such as living and learning in a group, verbalizing thoughts and feelings, and introspecting our life, were specific to Japanese results (Kanzaki & Suzuki, 2020). Another example is how the US team has now proposed a model that does not heavily rely on the notion of the self, after realizing that the Japanese team had a distinct meaning of the self from their own (Solberg & Park, 2021). We believe that this would not have been possible if we had used the traditional method of cross-cultural psychology in which a linguistically translated term and questionnaire was used. Dialogues between people who have diverse backgrounds lead to circulations of distinct knowledge and perspectives, which are essential for academic discipline to further advance.

Second, we need to shift our power and give voices to those who are often unheard. Rather too often, we import psychological concepts that have been developed elsewhere, assuming that the concept is universal and fits all; however, it is more likely that some parts of the concepts may apply but other parts do not. In particular, if we are to develop a program or an intervention that eventually involves people, we must be extremely cautious, because it can potentially bring more harm than benefits. While we are the experts in psychology, teachers are the experts in everyday teaching, classroom management, and students. Thus, bringing in the experts' voices – in this case, the teachers' words – is essential to understand what is really going on at a practical level. We listen to their stories, acknowledge their experiences, and give meaning to their voices, which are often overlooked in research. Hence, here again, dialogues are needed. Furthermore, giving voices to the unheard also means including countries that are underrepresented in psychological research. Shifting power and giving voice are powerful tools to empower those who are often neglected in psychological research at large.

Third, we must be aware and mindful of global issues as well as local contexts. Our globe is getting so small that we can access any places, persons, or goods anywhere in the world. Yet, we see so many divisions caused by economy, religion, and politics to just name a few. The globe faces many challenging problems, including COVID-19, climate change, and human rights violations, and it is crucial that we unite as one to fight against those. It is essential that, at the level of each society, we take its cultural and socio-political contexts into consideration in order to more effectively tackle the bigger issues at the global level. With regard to SEL, it is important that we, at the global level, unite to share what each of us has been learning from our research. At the same time, when we bring that knowledge to our society, we must mindfully consider how to cultivate the knowledge further with our own contextual factors.

We are standing at a point where, in order to move forward as a discipline, we need to redefine psychology – to acknowledge

what has been established in the past, to envision what should be achieved in the future, to accept what has been included and admit what has been neglected, and to allow the time and to make the effort. For better long-term impact, we need to re-think our attitude towards psychological research and its applications to people, because, after all, we believe that most researchers aim at the ultimate goal of gaining knowledge about human beings and contributing to an increase in human welfare.

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3

Social and emotional learning and resilience in Southeastern Europe: Educators' cross-cultural perspectives

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ABSTRACT

It has become clear in recent years that resilience is crucial for maintaining one's own and others' well-being in the face of the many expected and unexpected challenges in lives and careers. Educators are increasingly required to be resilient and promote resilience in their students to continue building capacities that improve their future, make them ready for the world of work and life, and maintain the well-being of all. The inclusion of social and emotional learning (SEL) in educational practices supports this aim and acts as a crucial nourishing component of resilience. In fact, teachers who have many SEL resources to address professional challenges become more resilient; and when they are aware of this, they are also able to transform the experience of their students by modelling resilient behaviors. In this paper, we will explore the understanding of resilience in the framework of SEL of 252 educators from Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Romania. The collected data are part of an international SEL research project involving more than 17 countries across the globe, which aims to explore educators' perceptions of SEL skills and their impact on students' career development. Results are discussed nationally and explained in relation to specific socio-cultural challenges. Moreover, in discussing the results transnationally, pedagogical suggestions are provided to help educators to develop materials and teaching activities that target SEL skills development.

Apprentissage social et émotionnel et résilience en Europe du Sud-Est : Perspectives interculturelles des éducateurs

Ces dernières années, il est devenu évident que la résilience est essentielle pour préserver son propre bien-être et celui des autres face aux nombreux défis attendus et inattendus de la vie et de la carrière. On demande de plus en plus aux éducateurs d'être résilients et de promouvoir la résilience chez leurs élèves afin de continuer à développer des capacités qui améliorent leur avenir, les rendent prêts pour le monde du travail et de la vie, et maintiennent le bien-être de tous. L'inclusion de l'apprentissage social et émotionnel (ASE) dans les pratiques éducatives soutient cet objectif et agit comme un élément nutritif crucial de la résilience. En effet, les enseignants qui disposent de nombreuses ressources ASE pour relever les défis professionnels deviennent plus résilients ; et lorsqu'ils en sont conscients, ils sont également capables de transformer l'expérience de leurs élèves en modélisant des comportements résilients. Dans cet article, nous allons

explorer la compréhension de la résilience dans le cadre du ASE de 252 éducateurs d'Italie, de Grèce, de Turquie et de Roumanie. Les données collectées font partie d'un projet international de recherche ASE impliquant plus de 17 pays à travers le monde, qui vise à explorer les perceptions des éducateurs sur les compétences ASE et leur impact sur le développement professionnel des élèves. Les résultats sont discutés au niveau national et expliqués par rapport à des défis socioculturels spécifiques. De plus, en discutant des résultats au niveau transnational, des suggestions pédagogiques sont fournies pour aider les éducateurs à développer des matériels et des activités d'enseignement qui ciblent le développement des compétences ASE.

Aprendizaje socioemocional y resiliencia en el sureste de Europa: Perspectivas transculturales de educadores

En los últimos años, ha quedado claro que la resiliencia es crucial para el bienestar propio y el de las demás personas para hacer frente a los numerosos retos en la vida y carrera profesional. A los y las educadores se les pide, cada vez más, que sean resilientes y promuevan la resiliencia en el alumnado para seguir desarrollando habilidades que mejoren su futuro, los preparen para el mundo laboral, la vida, y cuidar del bienestar de todas las personas. La inclusión del aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) en prácticas educativas fomenta este objetivo y actúa como un componente importante para la resiliencia. De hecho, los y las docentes que disponen de recursos SEL para enfrentar sus propios retos profesionales se vuelven más resilientes, y cuando son conscientes de ello, también son capaces de transformar la experiencia de sus alumnos, los cuales modelan comportamientos resilientes. En este artículo, exploramos cómo comprenden la resiliencia 252 educadores de Italia, Grecia, Turquía y Rumanía en el marco de SEL. Los datos recogidos forman parte de un proyecto internacional de investigación sobre SEL en el que participan más de 17 países

de todo el mundo y cuyo objetivo es explorar las percepciones de los educadores sobre habilidades de SEL y su impacto en el desarrollo profesional de los estudiantes. Discutimos los resultados a nivel nacional y en relación a desafíos socioculturales específicos. Además, al presentar y discutir los resultados a nivel transnacional, ofrecemos sugerencias pedagógicas para ayudar a educadores a desarrollar materiales y actividades de enseñanza que apunten al desarrollo de habilidades de SEL.

The nature of resilience in social and emotional learning

In the past year, resilience has emerged as crucial in maintaining one's own and others' well-being and in facing expected and unexpected challenges in lives and careers. The megatrends and challenges posed by the 4th industrial revolution have been further aggravated by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, these have highlighted the precariousness and inadequacy of many educational, health, work, and civic systems around the world. As regards schools, beyond the need to safeguard the health of students, teachers and all those who work in this context, there has been a huge effort to resort to distance learning. However, these circumstances have also highlighted the need for teachers to be resilient and promote resilience in their students in order to continue building capacities to improve their future, make them ready for the world of work and life, and maintain the well-being of all (Damico, 2020; Flores, 2020).

Despite many definitions of resilience and certain critiques related to the risk of asking people to learn to be resilient through unjust conditions rather than through questioning them or seeking to transform them, we conceive resilience to be 'both a process and outcome of coping in response to risk, adversity, or threats to well-being. It involves the interplay between internal strengths of the

individual and external supporting factors in the individual's social environment' (Johnson, 2008, p. 386). Being at least partly the result of learning, resilience is based on a set of thoughts, behaviors, and actions, which allows people to overcome stress and difficulties. In fact, teachers who have SEL resources to face professional challenges become more resilient themselves and, being aware of this, are also able to transform the experience of their students by modelling resilient behaviors (Skinner & Beers, 2016), offering growth opportunities, and involving parents and community stakeholders to increase students' participation in school to life experiences.

The inclusion of social and emotional learning in educational practices supports this aim and acts as a crucial nourishing component of resilience (Liu & Boyatzis, 2021). Evidence exists that increasing teachers' SEL skills increases their resilience (Lang et al., 2020) and that when teachers and educators invest in SEL education, students' resilience increases (Wall, 2021). Accordingly, in this paper we aim to explore educators' perspectives about resilience in the context of SEL, taking into account the social and cultural challenges faced by each country involved in the research. The emphasis on contextual factors emerges as particularly relevant in understanding the voice of educators from Italy, Greece, Turkey and Romania, and offers a glimpse of Southeastern Europe. Geographically located in a relatively small portion of the globe, the countries show some common challenges in distinctive socio-cultural contexts.

Socio-cultural challenges in Southeastern Europe

Among the many socio-cultural challenges, migration issues significantly impact school systems in all four countries. The countries are in fact considered at the center of the route taken by people from Africa and the Middle East looking for a better life and are often considered the door to the Northern Europe for many who aspire to live in wealthy, Western countries. The waves of immigrants and refugees arriving in Southeastern Europe have added to the distinctive socio-cultural challenges of each country, such as financial crises and changes in government, and have increased the complexities. The school system is no exception and as an institution it is requested to play its part, finding humanitarian solutions and offering inclusive answers for the future of the many children who should be helped to become 21st-century resilient adults. Under these circumstances, educators need to be resilient themselves and to promote resilience among their students in order to overcome cultural barriers, effectively resolve any emerging conflicts, and still remain focused on their students' learning. In this regard, literature has so far shown that resilience is promoted by SEL (Cahill & Dadvand, 2020).

Turkey has welcomed more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees from the civil war since 2011, along with refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants from other countries (UNHCR, 2021). In addition, it was reported that 54% of Syrian refugees are 18 years old or younger (UNICEF, 2016); that is, a very young population. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute data for 2021 (TurkStat, 2021), young people aged 15–24 constitute 15.4% of the total population and are characterized by high youth unemployment rates (26.9%).
The Turkish education system is organized as K–12 but is based on very competitive centralized exams for transition to upper education. A large number of young population and the number of refugees has undoubtedly affected schooling and education at all educational levels. SEL skills are part of classroom guidance programs developed for K–12 students (Ministry of National Education, Turkey, Classroom Guidance Programs, 2020). Activity books teaching SEL skills including self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, responsible decision-making and even well-being and resilience in these programs have been published (DİSREP, 2021).

After the fall of the communist regime in 1989, Romania shifted from a command to a market economy. As a member of the European Union since 2007, it has faced high levels of emigration in recent years. According to the National Authority for the

Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption (ANPDCA), in December 2019, 86,263 children had parents working abroad, of which 15,858 children had both parents abroad and 11,143 children had the sole supportive parent abroad (Save the Children, n.d.). Youth unemployment, unequal access to education and training, early school leaving especially in rural areas, Roma communities, and unaccompanied youth migrants, represent other salient socio-cultural and educational challenges. Concerning specifically the inclusion of migrants and refugees, according to the European website on integration (2020), the data shows that Romania received 2,592 asylum applications in 2019 from people coming mainly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Algeria. As in Turkey, Greece and Italy, an increase in the numbers of asylum seekers and migrants from Afghanistan to Romania is expected in the near future due to recent political changes (European website on integration, 2020). Problems related to migrants' inclusion, in the case of Romania, remain on a smaller scale overall compared to the other three countries even if the trend is growing rapidly. As an additional new challenge, the school system should be just as prepared and resilient at national, regional and local levels, in order to cope successfully. Accordingly, in this context, the National Curriculum in Romania comprises distinct compulsory and elective school subjects, with a focus on personal development and social-emotional skills in the curricular areas named 'Counselling and guidance' and 'People and society'.

Greece faced a major, long-lasting financial crisis in 2009–18, due to which the population has suffered from austerity and poverty, resulting in a wide variety of negative emotions and mental health issues (Davou & Demertzis, 2013). At the same time, Greece has struggled to help the refugees and immigrants entering the country in increasing numbers since 2015. Ensuring the right of underage refugees to education has been a key concern of the Greek Ministry of Education since the beginning of 2016. As a result, reforms have established refugees' integration in Greek schools and acceptance of their separate language and culture (Kikira, 2019). Teacher training was organized accordingly (Vergou, 2019). Due to the new societal situation, the Greek educational system no longer targets the national and Christian ideals that it did in the 1980s. Regarding SEL, this has not been included up till now in official primary and secondary education curricula, or even in teachers' bachelor studies for that matter, with one or two exceptions. SEL school programs were implemented by pre-primary, primary and secondary educators, on a voluntary basis, as part of the Health Education subject (Kourmousi & Koutras, 2018). Furthermore, only a few Greek SEL school programs exist (Kourmousi et al., 2018). However, starting from school-year 2021–22, the Greek Ministry of Education will establish skills' workshops – including social-emotional – in both primary and secondary education (Official Government Gazette n.96 Issue 1.11-06-2021).

Since the 1970s, Italy has become a country of immigration and not only of emigration. The challenge of multiculturalism for Italy has an undeniable root in the destabilization of a long history of an ingrained Christian/Catholic system of values that neuter the actual liberal democracy and which emerge in some right-wing movements. In addition, the economic crisis that followed 2008 exacerbated the ethnic and cultural tensions of the inclusion process (Hill, Silvestri, & Cetin, 2016). As a mirror of society, teachers face complex classes where the participation of all students is promoted. School inclusion, which since the 1970s has targeted students with disabilities so much that mainstream education for all was established by law, has now been enlarged to students with a foreign background (Ferrari & Sgaramella, 2020). In this perspective, SEL is a way of promoting social and school inclusion even if no national curricula exist and SEL education is locally decided. More recently, as a result of the pandemic and distance education, an increase in dropouts is of concern to the school system and the need for SEL is considered a way of coping with the isolation and stress experienced by students.

Method

This study was conducted as a part of a cross-cultural international research project involving more than 17 countries, known as SEL-IRN, which was recognized by the World Education Research Association (WERA). Based on modified grounded theory, each country collected and analyzed their own data, while collaborating with others in the SEL-IRN community to follow each process by regular meetings via Zoom. In the current study, four research teams specifically focused on identifying educators' perspectives regarding the nature of resilience in their social and cultural context and then compared these understandings across the four countries.

Participants

In this study, 252 educators were involved using convenience sampling: 95 from Italy, 68 from Turkey, 70 from Romania, and 19 from Greece. The participants represented a wide range of educators, including primary, middle, and high school teachers as well as school counsellors.

Data collection instrument and procedure

The SEL survey was designed by SEL-IRN, collaboratively, with all of the participating countries. Sample questions included: 'What SEL skills do you believe educators should use to effectively teach their students?' and 'How are these skills helpful as educators?' The survey also included some questions on demographic information such as education level, experience in years, age etc.

After translating the survey items into their own language, each country conducted data collection separately. Data was collected by sharing a survey link with potential participants and educator groups online as well as using the paper and pencil method, depending on each country's research conditions. Hence, each country had autonomy in this regard.

Data analysis

Prior to data analysis, the larger project team met online and discussed the data analysis procedure in detail. By adopting modified grounded theory, open coding was conducted by each country independently on their own data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this process, each team reviewed the responses several times and coded the answers line by line to reveal salient SEL skills. Using a constant comparative approach, the researchers coded data until they reached saturation, meaning that no new theme or code (SEL skills) emerged. Then, each country separately produced a codebook, which consisted of a description of every code in three parts: the title of each code (which identifies a SEL skill), its definition description, and direct quotations from educators' responses as examples of the relevant code (see in table 1 for an example from the Italian code for 'resilience').

Subsequently, correlations among the codes emerging from the above analysis across the four countries were calculated using NVivo software. The analysis showed that the correlations range from r=.48, resulting from the correlation of the Turkish codebook with the Romanian and Greek ones, and r=.34, resulting from correlating the Italian codebook with the Turkish and Greek. These correlations confirm that there is a shared understanding of SEL skills among educators from each country and suggest that their understanding of resilience could be explored across the four countries with attention to their distinctive socio-cultural challenges. The description of SEL skills as ones that are foundational to resilience, as well as the related socio-cultural trends for each country, are summarized below.

Findings: educators' understanding of resilience in Southeastern Europe

In Turkey, which is facing the challenges of high youth unemployment and youth migration, and where it is necessary to succeed in comprehensive central examinations in order to

enter higher education, educators mentioned that students should develop self-efficacy, self-management, and stress management with relevance to resilience to be able to overcome difficulties and succeed. Self-efficacy is recognized as a sense of capability to perform any specific task successfully that allows one to become resilient. For example, T55 emphasized that 'It is important for students to develop a sense of confidence alongside the idea that "I can do it, I can succeed", even if they face difficulties on the way'. Also, the skill of self-management was considered a positive resource, as 'It [self-management] is so important in the modern world, especially when there is a huge pressure from parents and society to be successful in high-stakes tests. If they have this skill, they can make their own decisions and this can release their pressure' (T66). Stress management emerged as a third key resource, as T13 asserts: 'Individuals should be able to have goals towards having a happy life and to manage their stress even in upsetting situations.' In addition, similarly to students, self-management and stress management are recognized as crucial also for teachers' resilience: T71 stated that 'Self-management skills enable teachers to set goals and targets during their teaching practice'. On the other hand, T67 mentioned the importance of teachers' own stress management skills, saying, 'I know some teachers who can't manage their stress and then they reflect their stress to the students, and they have been like this … frustrated for three years.'

In the Greek codebook, some specific skills in regard to both educators' and students' resilience also emerged, mirroring the increasing diversification of Greek society, with the constant threat of economic crisis. Educators answered that SEL helps them to improve their self-awareness and achieve a set of resilience skills (T5, 7, 10, 12, 16) that focus both on the self – including self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-acting – and on self- and interpersonal management, including self-management (T6, 14), conflict management (T6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19), crisis management (T9, 11) and status normalization, as well as stress management (T4, 6, 7)

and managing relationships in crisis (T9, 11). SEL's impact on their ability to maintain their calmness and deal more effectively with difficult situations, by enabling them to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations, was emphasized (T1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 18). Greek teachers also stated that having belief in their own abilities and feeling confident in their choices and behaviors, they can more easily manage unexpected negative and harsh events and situations as well as students with problems, conflicts and provocative behavior (T5, 9, 16). According to them, SEL also helps them to deal with feelings of failure and to be able to move on, while it promotes the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a more rational, balanced and effective way (T11, 12). In regard to their students, Greek educators appeared to believe that SEL helps them to deal effectively with failure (T7, 17), to avoid frustration (T11, 12) and quitting (T4). It also enables them to achieve conflict resolution (T1, 7, 9, 18, 19) by maintaining their calmness (T1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 18) and finding solutions in difficult situations (T6, 18). It also enhances students' acting on their own (T5, 11) and self-awareness (T5, 7, 10, 12, 16). Self-awareness helps students with proper self-evaluation, in feeling more confident (T5, 9, 16), more self-sufficient (T5, 11) and therefore being able to take the initiative to manage relationships in crisis (T2, 13) and contribute to crisis management in school settings (T13, 17).

The Italian teachers considered resilience as a resource that helps students to accept that mistakes can happen and to use them as a stimulus to work harder in order to achieve future success. Teachers in fact emphasize that 'students have to learn to get up again after making a mistake, without facing every fall as a failure' (T25). The historical attention to the pedagogical epistemology of the error (Antiseri, 1977; 1985) echoes this perspective. Resilience emerges as a teacher's set of positive resources that are helpful when teaching and which foster an equally positive attitude and skills set in students. Teachers should be a model and a point of reference with regards to 'his/her attitudes toward students' (T9). Teachers should also be able to evaluate carefully, select the best

option, and use methodologies such as cooperative learning, in order to help students experience interdependence as 'a moment of ensemble music in which the students work in a team, and each contributes to the overall success of the result' (T45).

In accordance with Italy's long history of school inclusion (Sgaramella & Ferrari, 2020), resilience is related to being able to appreciate differences, recognizing diversity as uniqueness and consequently respecting and valuing it. It is in fact crucial to 'have respect for all forms of diversity, which need not necessarily be understood or explained but simply accepted' (T31). Accordingly, resilience is related to the ability to collaborate, which includes respect for each other and solidarity. Interdependence emerges in 'accepting the help and support of the teacher and classmates by becoming one, a team that cooperates to achieve the goal of the individual' (T73) while at the same time resisting social pressure; that is, 'being emotionally strong and able to manage inappropriate requests that arise from the context' (T57). Resilience is also related to school engagement and the active participation of all students such as 'more willing to learn' (T66); providing emotional education, since this allows them to 'achieve higher awareness about self and acquiring skills to manage them' (T21); and fostering self-efficacy – that is, believing in their abilities and talent to overcome the feeling of 'I'm not able to'; and 'becoming objective in the assessment of one's abilities' (T12).

According to the Romanian educators, resilience means achieving success in dealing with emotions for children whose parents are abroad, echoing the specific national situation of emigration: 'In the case of children with parents abroad, it is necessary to manage special emotions (e.g., fear of abandonment, the idea that you are not loved by the absent mother)' (T93). The ability to 'manage special emotions' is at the core of the definition and emphasizes the wider need to ensure resilience, that is, learning how to deal with overwhelming emotions: 'Teaching students how to manage their emotions is very important. Even if an intellectually capable person loses a job interview to a less

prepared person, they can cope with the stress. It is important to be detached and not to be overwhelmed by emotions. This can be learned from an early age through exercise' (T66).

Concerning Romanian educators' ability to manage and teach serenely, this would mean focusing on detaching themselves from difficulties: '…teachers could better manage their emotions at school if they could detach themselves from the difficulties they face in the family or the ones created by the education system. It would be more useful for them as well as for students if the lesson would take place *hic et nunc* [here and now]' (T33). Finally, they consider overcoming difficulties as being necessary for building resilience: 'Each day is a test and ways must be found to overcome the difficulties that have arisen' (T73).

Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis of this study has highlighted that school systems in Southeastern Europe face numerous socio-cultural challenges induced by a complexity involving both internal forces, such as democratic pressures and emigration processes, as well as external ones such as immigration processes. These elements form the background to the teachers' point of view on social-emotional competences, which has been considered here in light of the concept of resilience. The rich picture that emerges allows us to affirm the cross-national transversality of these concepts, which finds its raison d'être in equipping the new generations with knowledge and skills that are useful for facing the future successfully. The work paths that we can outline to promote resilience in a SEL perspective involve both teachers and students. As far as students are concerned, it emerges as particularly important to focus on the promotion of positive resources related to the self, through building psychological capital characterized by self-awareness and self-efficacy beliefs, and through learning strategies to manage complex situations, both from the point of view of emotions that can accompany particularly stressful events

and situations and from accepting and overcoming failure. The curricula should present materials that promote resilience attitudes and strategies in this perspective.

An example of a national SEL curriculum that includes activities to promote resilience is offered to Romanian students from lower secondary education (middle school). On a weekly basis, they attend school subjects that focus on self, relational and citizenship development. For example, concerning the set of competences included in 'Making safe and healthy decisions to prevent potentially risky or crisis situations', 8th grade students carry out a series of reflective exercises on how to relate to change, such as: 'Do I like the changes in my life?', 'What do I wish to change and what not?', etc. They also do exercises to identify, using worksheets, potentially risky situations, such as abusive/exploitative relationships, exams, migration and/or crisis (Ministry of National Education, 2017). The involvement of the Ministry of Education has been crucial in developing such a national engagement. In this regard, as a response to the pandemic, the Unit of Research in Education from the National Centre for Policies and Evaluation in Education (NCPEE) was invited to develop a guide to support school counsellors, teachers and students with examples of SEL programs and activities, including resilience for learners in primary and secondary schools and ICT-based examples (Andrei, 2020a, b, c). More specifically, digital textbooks have been elaborated for students, which contain static, animated and interactive activities on how to develop pupils' SEL skills, e.g., resilience skills using the technology at Counselling and personal development (CPD) lessons, 8th grade (https://manuale.edu.ro/manuale/Clasa%20a%20VIII-a/Consiliere%20si%20dezvoltare%20personala/Uy5DLiBDRCBQUkVTUyBT/book.html?book#18).

Also, in Turkey, the involvement of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has been crucial in developing and publishing, in collaboration with UNICEF, materials regarding psychosocial support for students from kindergarten to high school, as well as parents, and teachers. These materials include psychoeducation

programs, activities, brochures, and flyers about difficult life experiences such as sexual abuse, natural disasters, crisis, and loss and grief; these all aim to foster a variety of SEL skills, including resilience and relevant skills such as self-efficacy, self-management and stress management, which also emerged from the Turkish codebook in this study. For instance, a psychoeducation program prepared by MoNE, Turkey (2020) aims at supporting resilience through improving self- and stress management skills of kindergarten students during the pandemic. The program includes activities for awareness of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors during the pandemic, expression of emotions appropriately, developing coping skills, being aware of social support resources and inner strengths, and improving hope for the future. In the first activity, for instance, a short story about a squirrel family who encounter a pandemic while living peacefully in the forest is shared with students. A picture of the story is shown, with follow-up questions for discussion with students, such as, 'What might a baby squirrel feel/think during the pandemic? How do you feel? What did you think? What might have s/he done when s/he has to stay at home? What did you do?' Then, students are asked to complete the story of the squirrel family. Moreover, in 2021, psychosocial support programs including teaching SEL skills for school counselors have also been developed through a collaboration between the MoNE and UNICEF to help students suffering from difficult life experiences such as violence, sexual abuse, and natural disasters.

Finally, a couple of widely implemented good practices which support resilience development in Greece may be presented. Taking into account the diversities of Greek schools, the need for inclusivity and the challenge of the current pandemic, the 'Steps for Life: Teachers' Guide for the Opening of Schools During the Pandemic' (Kourmousi, Koutras, & Kounenou, 2020) is an inclusive program offered by the Department of Education of School of Pedagogical & Technological Education, which aims to promote a positive classroom climate and successful class management, with lessons created to help teachers enhance students' resilience and

other SEL skills such as stress management, empathy, and self-care. Similarly, the second good practice concerns an evidenced-based nine-step model for the safe teaching of stress and emotion management, offered by two pre-primary and primary SEL programs with an inclusive aim (Kourmousi et al., 2018; Kourmousi et al., 2017), including (a) naming emotion, (b) external recognition, (c) internal recognition, (d) stages of emotion, (e) causes of emotion in self, (f) causes of emotion in others, (g) usual expression of emotion, (h) estimation of the consequences, and (j) best ideas for handling emotions. For example, regarding the causes of emotion in others, students reflect on inclusion, with questions such as 'What things do you think would make a young refugee feel ... (*name of emotion*)?' (Kourmousi et al., 2018, p. 537).

At the relational level, there appeared to be a need to promote attitudes and strategies that aim at the participation of all, dealing with ever-changing forms of diversity and promoting forms of social sustainability. Attention should specifically be paid to examples and the appropriate use of language in order to be inclusive and promote the reduction of cultural and gender stereotypes. For example, concerning jobs, Vervecken et al. (2013) clearly showed that when occupations are presented using paired forms (i.e., female and male engineers), compared to generic masculine forms, a gender-balanced perception of success in 'male jobs' is perceived and girls show higher interest in 'male jobs'. This requires teachers to assume a critical perspective, and, sometimes, the courage to advocate for higher quality teaching materials. For example, very recently in Italy a teacher criticized, in the media, the inadequacy of a primary school textbook in which a girl of Chinese origin was denigrated through a linguistic play on words.

As far as teachers are concerned, there appeared to be an awareness of the importance of their role as resilient actors able to instill positive attitudes and strategies in their students by posing as significant models. Also, in the present study, a focus on both the management of self and of relationships was highlighted. The ability to self-regulate and manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors takes on significance as facilitating problem-solving and protection from stress. Offering teachers and preservice teachers' opportunities to develop their SEL skills emerges as a priority for guaranteeing high quality teaching and learning.

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4

The 4th Industrial Revolution and social and emotional learning in Africa: Implications for educational materials

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ABSTRACT
The 4th Industrial Revolution (IR) is disrupting almost every industry across the globe. Characterized as 'a fusion of technologies,' the 4th IR is blurring the line between physical and digital spaces and influencing the rapid transformation of business and government systems with the potential to improve the quality of our life, including educational opportunities (Schwab, 2016). This paper discusses challenges of the 4th IR in four sub-Saharan African countries – Burkina Faso, South Africa, Togo, and Uganda – as they relate to the skills that cannot be replaced by robots and machines and the importance of social and emotional learning skills. The premise of this paper is that SEL can help young people respond to the challenges and opportunities of the 4th IR even in countries that are less technologically advanced and might seem weakly influenced or uninfluenced by it. It concludes with implications for educational materials, in particular the use of online resources and social media as a fast-growing method for providing information and training, and on what needs to be considered for designing educational materials in the post-COVID era.

La 4ème révolution industrielle et l'apprentissage social et émotionnel en Afrique : Implications pour le matériel pédagogique

La 4e révolution industrielle (RI) perturbe presque toutes les industries du monde. Caractérisée comme 'une fusion de technologies', la 4e RI estompe la frontière entre les espaces physique et numérique, et influence la transformation rapide des systèmes commerciaux et gouvernementaux avec le potentiel d'améliorer la qualité de notre vie, y compris les opportunités éducatives (Schwab, 2016). Ce document traite des défis de la 4e RI dans quatre pays d'Afrique subsaharienne – Burkina Faso, Afrique du Sud, Togo et Ouganda – en lien avec les compétences qui ne peuvent être remplacées par des robots et des machines, et l'importance des compétences d'apprentissage social et émotionnel. Cet article part du principe que l'ASE peut aider les jeunes à répondre aux défis et aux opportunités de la 4e RI, même dans les pays qui sont technologiquement moins avancés et qui pourraient sembler faiblement influencés ou non-influencés par celle-ci. L'article se termine par des implications pour le matériel pédagogique, en particulier l'utilisation des ressources en ligne et des médias sociaux comme méthode en plein essor pour fournir des informations et des formations, et sur les éléments à prendre en compte pour la conception de matériel pédagogique dans l'ère post-COVID.

La 4ª Revolución Industrial y el aprendizaje socioemocional en África: implicaciones para los materiales educativos

La 4ª Revolución Industrial (RI) está afectando a casi todas las industrias del mundo. Caracterizada como 'una fusión de tecnologías', la 4ª RI está desdibujando la línea entre los espacios físicos y digitales e influyendo en la rápida transformación de los sistemas empresariales y gubernamentales con el potencial de mejorar la calidad de nuestra vida, incluidas las oportunidades educativas (Schwab, 2016). Este documento analiza los desafíos de la 4ª RI en cuatro países de África subsahariana – Burkina Faso, Sudáfrica, Togo y Uganda – en lo que respecta a las habilidades que no pueden ser reemplazadas por robots y máquinas y la importancia de las habilidades de aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés). La premisa de este documento es que el SEL puede ayudar a jóvenes a responder a los retos y oportunidades de la 4ª RI incluso en países menos avanzados tecnológicamente y que podrían parecer poco influenciados o no influenciados por ella. En la conclusión mencionamos implicaciones para materiales educativos, en particular, el uso de los recursos en línea y las redes sociales como un método de rápido crecimiento para brindar información y formación, los cuales deben ser considerados para el diseño de materiales educativos en la era post-COVID.

Understanding the 4th IR in the African context

It is often said that the 4th Industrial Revolution has changed the way we work, communicate, and live in both positive and negative ways. The changes and challenges that it has brought include different uses and impacts of data, including machine learning, work-from-anywhere, telemedicine, over- or under-stimulation, and stress due to the increased abstraction of tasks, leaving us with several implications for the job market, education, and the future of the workplace (Toscanelli, Fedrigo, & Rossier, 2019). According to Schwab (2016), the 4th IR is characterized as 'a fusion of technologies'

built on top of the 3rd IR, which was focused on automating production using electronics and information technology. The 4th IR is different from its predecessor in that it is blurring the line between physical and digital spaces and influencing the rapid transformation of business and government systems. In the context of Africa, the 4th IR has brought six major technological changes, including Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, 3D printing, Blockchain, and drones (KOAFEC, 2019). Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, is found to be using older technologies and having lower internet speed and access, compared to other regions in Africa. While acknowledging the 'disruptive' impact of 4th IR, it should be noted that there are different histories of modern society rather than a single history (Mapadimeng, 2019). Thus, any notion that there is a single historical time or a one-dimensional course of events is erroneous, and an in-depth qualitative analysis, located within the context of long-term/wave theories of change, is necessary. Below, we initiate this conversation on the changes happening in the African labor market, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, and describe how SEL is connected to technological changes in the workplace during the 4th IR.

The labor market and the informal economy in Africa

Eighty-five percent of employment in Africa is informal (ILO, 2020a). While the proportion varies across the continent, it is estimated that over 40% in southern Africa and 90% in central Africa are involved in this sector (ILO, 2020a). The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2020b) defines the informal economy as all legal 'economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements' (p. 34). While extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has decreased in the past 20 years, including in all four countries that participated in this paper – Burkina Faso, South Africa, Togo, and Uganda – it was found that more than 80

percent of the jobs remain informal with limited social protections such as retirement benefits, vacation time, and sick leave (Rossier & Ouedraogo, 2021). In addition to few social protections, most workers experience precarious and harsh working conditions.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography of Burkina Faso, the working hours per week for those in the informal sector are excessive (more than 48 hours), with wages well below minimum standards. Employees find the work unsatisfactory due to its arduousness, poor working conditions, and lack of social security (Rossier & Ouedraogo, 2021). Togolese young people also experience the imbalance of labor supply and demand, leading to extreme job precariousness in the informal sector (Yabouri, 2015). A longitudinal study (PERI Report, 2013) reported that Togolese higher education and Vocational and Technical Education graduates are severely underemployed (33.6% and 46.7%, respectively), with many in insecure, unprotected temporary employment.

In response to education system challenges, combined with some of the highest unemployment rates in the world, South African businesses are considering a strategy of investing in local talent who can provide digital services to companies instead of waiting for the education system to catch up (Pienaar, 2020). While this continues to call into question the responsiveness of South Africa's education system, the involvement of corporate businesses and non-government organizations, from the perspectives of the skills demand and supply, is welcomed as it can provide a better alignment and a higher chance of preparing youth for the 21st-century workplace in collaboration with government and the education system. It should be noted, however, that the provision of learning materials by businesses will be effective only if they are developed in consideration of youth development and investing in future talent.

The impact of technological advancement

Dr Ngozi Okon Iweala, the former Nigerian Minister of Finance, declared in 2018 that 7 million jobs will be lost with the introduction of artificial intelligence. Pienaar (2020) also stated that the division of work between humans and technology is expected to become equal by 2025 in South Africa. The dynamics of technological changes, however, involve not only job destruction but also their creation as well as the transformation of existing jobs (estimated as an 85 million global job loss which will be counteracted by 97 million new jobs to be created; Pienaar, 2020). Six of the ten fastest-growing economies in the globe are in sub-Saharan Africa (KOAFEC, 2019). According to the World Economic Forum report (2020), labor market changes caused by the 4th IR will create new jobs in seven occupational sectors: the green economy, the data economy and artificial intelligence, engineering and cloud computing, product development, the care economy, marketing, sales, and content production, and human management and culture. Given that 70% of sub-Saharan Africa's population is under the age of 30, the sectors that primarily use digital technology are highly likely to have particular appeal for many of the younger workers in the area (Ordu, Cooley & Goh, 2021). It should be noted that some of the jobs in these industries cannot be replaced by robots and machines, especially those in the care economy and human management and culture.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the African continent, it has also revealed limitations in infrastructure. Smit, Preston and Hay (2020) argue that transformation is much too slow and in some cases at a standstill. In Togo, for instance, many public and private universities had to develop ways to provide distance learning, and some employers adopted telecommuting as an option for their workers. However, while the demands for remote learning/working were high, technology has not met people's expectations due to weak network connections and a lack of infrastructure. Internet access in Burkina Faso is also challenging. According to the World Bank (2017), only 15.9% of the Burkinabe population has access to the internet, while only 0.064% have a subscription to fixed-line services. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that only 22%

of the population has internet connectivity (e.g. telephone lines, broadband connections, wireless devices) (IFC, 2017). While the lack of stable internet connectivity undermines the functioning of online education and businesses that promote telecommuting, the situation is far worse for businesses operating within the informal economy (INSD &AFRISTAT, 2019).

When there is connectivity, many people have the option of connecting with their mobile devices. The GSM Association, which represents mobile technology and operators worldwide, states that the majority of the African population have mobile internet access – with an exception in sub-Saharan Africa where only two-thirds are covered by mobile broadband – and 90% of the population has now achieved 2G coverage (KOAFEC, 2019). A survey conducted in four sub-Saharan countries – Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, and Uganda – found that phone surveys are a useful tool for collecting and disseminating labor market information and providing valid insights (Weber, Palacios-Lopez & Contreras-González, 2020). In Togo, employers frequently use social media and other communication platforms like LinkedIn, AfricSearch, and Lucreatif to post job opportunities, which can be easily accessed from mobile devices. Job seekers can send their applications via email addresses or one of these platforms. Another technological change in relation to employment is an increased number of automatic teller machines (ATM), even in the most remote areas. While this is considered part of the 3rd IR, it becomes the foundation of digital advancement and transition to autonomous work without human intervention and borders, which characterizes the 4th IR. Sending and receiving payment through ATMs has increased in Africa, as well as the use of credit cards, facilitating more transactions. Such change, in turn, has impacted the macro-dynamics of the labor market, such as the creation of new jobs (e.g., ATM maintainers), job destruction (e.g., bank tellers), as well as growth in existing jobs (e.g., security guards). With the population of elderly people in sub-Saharan Africa jumping from 43 million in 2010 to 163 million in 2015, technological advancement in home-care now needs to

utilize intelligent health monitoring and providing more affordable e-health services to those in need (KOAFEC, 2019).

The 4th IR and COVID-19 have also uncovered how little the continent was prepared for remote learning, mainly due to a lack of infrastructure. The seminal OECD (2018) Working Paper states that both technical and social and emotional learning skills increase employability in the 4th IR occupations and contribute to individuals' professional development and healthy functioning in society. The opportunities for developing these skills are, however, limited in sub-Saharan Africa and even more restricted with remote learning. It is also questionable whether youth are provided with adequate materials that would help them maximize their learning and whether educators are provided with the right resources and training to help them use new technology and assist youth in utilizing them for their future. Even at the post-basic education level, it is uncertain whether universities and training institutions are able to reflect the changes, identify the skills demanded in a fast-changing environment, and prepare our young adults for the future. As an unprecedented case in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa took the first step in this movement. The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 was launched in 2019 to align education, workforce readiness, and work-based learning opportunities with high-demand occupations. The plan proposes a multi-tiered approach and emphasizes the importance of marketable technical skills. While technical skills refer to the use of technologies that align to a particular occupation, the remainder of this article will focus on the nature and value of social-emotional learning skills (SEL) as the 'deep human skills' that are harder to replace through technology and are highly relevant to 4th IR occupations.

The importance of SEL and deep human skills

The worldwide pandemic has taught us that we need to rethink how to educate our children. While maintaining physical distance, we learned how to stay in contact with our loved

ones, show empathy to our neighbors and community, and continue education despite the odds. Educators working with younger students, for instance, learned how to smile with their eyes and express their emotions from behind a mask. Masks with a clear window or transparent masks often helped them exhibit their emotions and feelings better so that the youth could learn how to articulate their emotions and continue developing their emotional intelligence. For educators working with older students, it was an opportunity to teach them social responsibility and how to make an impact on their community, by creating public service videos or spreading the word on the importance of getting vaccinated, for instance. SEL skills like communication, critical thinking, taking initiative, leadership, and empathy clearly became the important elements that helped us move forward during the pandemic. Zins, Elias, and Greenberg (2003) suggested the need for SEL skills interventions in South Africa, to ameliorate the social challenges presented by HIV/AIDS pandemic, violence, crime, and substance abuse; there is the same need during the COVID pandemic. Shortly before the pandemic, a study to understand the perceptions of SA educators with regard to SEL skills (Marsay, 2019) revealed that SA educators highlighted the importance of two skills specifically to improve the learning environment and also to assist learners making the transition from education to the world of work: namely self-management and relationship-building skills.

A meta-analytic study found that, on average, SEL interventions have a positive impact on academic outcomes (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011) as well as contributing to building positive mental health and well-being among young students (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak & Weissberg, 2017). Although the majority of the SEL interventions included in Durlak and his colleagues' study were conducted in the United States, 27 of them (13%) were from outside the US. Supported by evidence, international groups such as the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

took a major step in SEL education and identified it as core to education (Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni & Downes, 2018; Cefai, Regester & Akoury-Dirani, 2020; OECD, 2016). More specific to sub-Saharan Africa, an SEL intervention conducted in Nigeria found that SEL supports the mental health of youth who have experienced trauma (Kim, Brown, & Weiss-Yagoda, 2017), and another intervention in Congo reported that SEL promotes both academic and mental health outcomes of youth when combined with reading skills (Aber, Tubbs, Torrente, et al., 2016).

4th IR occupations often involve interacting in small group project teams, and therefore advanced SEL skills or 'deep human skills' such as collaboration, complex communication, expressing empathy and compassion, and cultural competencies are critical to becoming successful in the 4th IR world of work (Cappelli & Tavis, 2018; Lim-Lange & Lim-Lange, 2019; Yoder, Atwell, Godek et al., 2020). While overlapping with SEL skills, deep human skills are focused around learning and remaining relevant to the ever-changing workplace (Lim-Lange & Lim-Lange, 2019). Cappelli and Tavis (2018) argue that the 4th IR demands proactive career management whereby one seeks to develop the deep human skills and technical skills needed to pursue personal goals and thereby increase future employability by continuously expanding one's skills and talent. We use both SEL and deep human skills in our work, with an emphasis on the process of continuous learning when referring to deep human skills.

Culturally specific deep human skills in the 4th Industrial Revolution

Our research in Africa was part of a larger effort with 18 countries across the globe studying (a) educator perceptions of the nature and value of social-emotional learning skills and (b) how SEL is connected to preparing students for the future (SEL IRN, n.d.). This larger effort allows for consideration of how political, economic, and social contexts may contribute to highlighting which SEL skills

are perceived by educators as most relevant to their respective countries. Across all participating countries, educators were aware of the importance of SEL in educating youth and agreed that SEL plays a critical role in preparing youth for the workplace. It was also found that few countries have systems in place to help educators effectively teach SEL skills and to support educators in developing their own SEL skills (Kounenou, Kourmousi, Ferrari et al., in press). Another result was that while many countries, including the African countries represented here, use similar SEL terms, there are also nuanced interpretations of these terms that reflect cultural and societal differences. For example, the interpretations of 'healthy' relationships varied, with some focused on respecting each other's opinions, while in other parts of the world, they implied relationships that affect one's physical health (e.g., eating healthily, exercising together). 'Empathy' was another theme that reflects cultural and societal differences. Educators in Greece who face a large number of immigrant and refugee students used terms such as 'managing conflicts' and 'perspective-taking' when discussing empathy. Educators in South Africa, on the other hand, focused on 'compassion' when discussing empathy, emphasizing the difficulty that individual students might be experiencing in their communities. Below, we provide some examples of deep human – SEL – skills that our research teams in Africa identified as culturally specific. We acknowledge that although this may not represent the whole continent it describes how these skills are connected to the 4th IR in our respective country contexts.

Togolese educators most frequently identified self-management as an important SEL skill in preparing youth for the workplace (Marsay, Atitsogbe, Ouedraogo et al, 2021). Educators in South Africa identified both self-management and relationship skills as the two most important skills (Marsay, 2019): 'Young people need this kind of learning [SEL skills] to prepare them for the challenges and adversities/diversities outside of school'. Another educator also emphasized the importance of self-management skills (Marsay, 2019): 'Self-management will increase work ethic and enhance time-management. Stress levels will decrease if self-management is applied daily.' Ugandan educators mentioned self-regulation as part of self-management and in connection with peer-relationships: 'When two boys were fighting, I talked to them about self-discipline.' Ugandan educators also believed students need support in developing better relationship skills, and Burkinabe educators identified relational leadership as an important skill that unites students around a work goal (Marsay et al, 2021). Theron (2017) emphasizes the importance of relationships in enhancing individual resilience, as African youth are vulnerable to structural disadvantages in their everyday lives. Accordingly, in reflecting on the findings of our study and the changes happening in Africa, we believe that there are two major deep human skills that are tightly intertwined and culturally relevant to our youth in the time of 4th IR: self-management and relationship skills. Importantly, there are possibilities to strengthen these skills through digital technologies.

Digital technologies in Sub-Saharan Africa have until now been limited to those who are literate, and the adult illiterate population was estimated at 34% in 2019 in Sub-Saharan Africa (Szmigiera, 2021). However, with the technological advancement of the 4th IR, more people – whether fully literate or not – can interact via social media by means of audio files and video clips, using them for increasing productivity in their private and professional lives. Accelerated by COVID-19, social networking and learning through online channels have become an obligation rather than a choice (Mbiydzenyuya & Silungwe, 2020). While more issues need to be addressed, such as costs and privacy issues of storing information in the cloud (Owiny, Mehta, & Maretzki, 2014), there is clearly an opportunity for digital support of SEL education and skills development that can develop both self-management and relationship skills.

Implications for developing educational materials: Use of online resources and social media in SEL education and career development

Drawing from Solberg et al's (2020) recommendations, career development systems and programs need to shift from a career choice and decision-making paradigm to the establishment of quality interventions that enable 'high need, high opportunity' youth to explore how their SEL skills align with a range of informal and formal occupational opportunities. The development of freely accessible SEL educational materials, resources, career guidance, and training suited to different age groups including youth, adolescents, and young adults is necessary to address inequities in funding and resources experienced by high need, high opportunity youth. Open educational resources (OER) may be just as effective for achieving learning outcomes as traditional textbooks (Hilton, 2016), while providing more accessibility to students who were previously unable to afford textbooks (Feldstein, Martin, Hudson et al., 2012). In addition, the flexibility and adaptability of OER have the potential of making a difference in preparing youth for the fast-changing world of work.

In developing economies like Togo, vocational guidance and career counseling activities are still marginal and most career counselors are located in the capital, Lomé (Pari, Holu, Kazimna, Tchonda & Alfa, 2020). For instance, only one career counselor is available in the State University of Lomé, which has around 50,000 students. Secondary school students in the capital are more likely to benefit from adequate career guidance and counseling, which raises a question of social justice in different areas of the country. In such a context of limited resources regarding vocational guidance and career counseling, the use of online resources and social media becomes even more important in providing access to opportunities to learn deep human skills and their application in vocations of interest to students. Creating such resources can start from many different places but requires collaboration between educators and employers who can ensure the quality of the resources. Good examples are Advtech and Valenture Institute in South Africa. Advtech, the largest private education provider in Africa, provides online learning opportunities designed in collaboration with knowledge and industry experts, focusing on developing 21st-century skills. As a social enterprise, Valenture Institute also works with higher education institutions to create aspirational online programs for high school students and encourages them to obtain pre-college certificates. It was estimated that the e-learning market in sub-Saharan Africa would be worth $1.4 billion by 2020 (KOAFEC, 2019) and will continue to grow.

Some researchers found that using social media in education has been difficult because of slow connectivity, especially in rural areas (Atitsogbe, Moumoula, Rochat, Antonietti, & Rossier, 2018). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has stimulated a remarkable improvement in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), with local authorities using chatbots and WhatsApp to fight against myths and misinformation about the coronavirus (Karumba, 2020). The private sector is also becoming increasingly involved, in partnership with the government, in making education programs downloadable free of charge. These programs cover various topics, including subject matter, SEL, and 21st-century skills. Many of the private organizations, such as Partners for Possibility, Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, Catholic Education, Islamic Education in South Africa, and Afrika Tikkun, became involved in this partnership because they see the connections between education, skills development, and social change and believe that government–private sector collaborations can contribute to closing the digital divide. Meanwhile, youth are developing relationship skills using social media (e.g., WhatsApp), gathering information that they are interested in and learning how to manage information provided by AI (e.g., archiving relevant information, sharing with those who might be interested, discarding information/emails not relevant to them, and keeping separate email

accounts for work and private use). There is a need to create online education programs and activities that maximize the development of these relationship and self-management skills, the two skills identified as culturally relevant to the sub-Saharan countries participating in this study. As part of whole child career development, an example lesson/activity can be 'Optimizing Your Learning', created by Boston University Center for Future Readiness in collaboration with a community-based organization called Sociedad Latina. The lesson, which can be delivered in person or virtually, synchronously or asynchronously, allows students to explore the learning challenges they are experiencing (e.g., stress, pressure), learn about some coping strategies to consider (e.g., breathing, connecting with friends), and practice some of these strategies until the next class. A follow-up lesson to this involves an experiment where students complete stressful or mindful activities and take a small test to compare the scores. Both lessons are publicly available for educators to adopt and implement (Sociedad Latina, 2021).

Two important aspects may be considered in designing educational materials in the sub-Saharan context: to pay close attention to the two most culturally relevant SEL skills of self-management and relationship skills and to ensure free access so that regardless of location, youth and families can access lessons and information and educators can easily adopt SEL interventions. Government–private sector engagement would be critical to ensure the quality of the resources and effective dissemination (Gumede, 2021). Transmitting these materials using social media would have a further benefit by promoting both self-management and relationship skills; however, it should be cautioned that social media can also be used for surveillance capitalism as well as spreading misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories. Lastly, in the context of Africa, it has been well documented as a pattern of cultural behavior that people who need information or have to make an important decision approach a knowledgeable person whom they trust

and go through a validation process (Owiny, Mehta, & Maretzki, 2014). Such a pattern is also commonly observed among students who can feel confident after having their decision validated by educators or parents (Marsay et al, 2021., under review; Sovet, Bomda, Ouedraogo, & Atitsogbe, 2013). This speaks to us that the involvement of family and the community needs to be considered in designing a quality intervention, and there is a need for further investigation on their roles in preparing youth for the future in the context of Africa.

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5

The importance of 'school climate' in achieving SEL and academic goals among students

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ABSTRACT

There is growing recognition among countries that 'quality education' refers not just to the academic aspects of schooling but also to softer aspects, such as adequate availability of resources in school, feelings of safety, open and inclusive classroom environment, collegial working environment for teachers, and empowerment of principals. Together, these aspects inform a school's climate and can impact the achievement of SEL and academic goals among students, while also determining the quality of workplace for teachers and principals. Given the far-reaching effects that schools can have on all their stakeholders, it becomes important to determine whether schools are indeed positive, safe and conducive to learning and growth. We argue, based on findings from our multi-year study on school climate in India, that adequate attention must be paid to the different dimensions of school climate if we are to realize the targets set by SDG 4 in a holistic manner.

L'importance du 'climat scolaire' pour atteindre les objectifs SEL et académiques des élèves

Les pays reconnaissent de plus en plus que la 'qualité de l'éducation' ne concerne pas seulement les aspects académiques de la scolarité, mais aussi des aspects plus subjectifs, tels que la disponibilité adéquate des ressources à l'école, le sentiment de sécurité, un environnement de classe ouvert et inclusif, un environnement de travail collégial pour les enseignants et la responsabilisation des directeurs, entre autres. Ensemble, ces aspects influencent le climat d'une école et peuvent influencer la réalisation des objectifs ASE et scolaires des élèves, tout en déterminant la qualité du lieu de travail des enseignants et l'autonomisation des directeurs. Compte tenu des effets considérables que les écoles peuvent avoir sur toutes leurs parties prenantes, il devient important de déterminer si les écoles sont effectivement positives, sûres et propices à l'apprentissage et à la croissance. Nous soutenons, sur la base des résultats de notre étude pluriannuelle sur le climat scolaire en Inde, qu'une attention adéquate doit être accordée aux différentes dimensions du climat scolaire si nous voulons atteindre les cibles fixées par l'ODD 4 de manière holistique.

La importancia del 'clima escolar' para la obtención de objetivos académicos y de SEL entre estudiantes

Cada vez más, los países reconocen que la 'educación de calidad' se refiere no sólo a los aspectos académicos de la escolarización, sino también a aspectos menos tangibles, como la disponibilidad de recursos para escuelas, la sensación de seguridad, el entorno abierto e inclusivo en el aula, un contexto de trabajo adecuado para los y las docentes y la capacitación de directores y directoras de centros, entre otros. En conjunto, estos aspectos generan el clima de un centro escolar y pueden influir en la obtención de objetivos académicos y de aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) entre el alumnado. Al mismo tiempo, determinan la calidad del lugar de trabajo de los y las docentes y directores. Dados los efectos a largo plazo que las escuelas pueden tener los grupos de interés, es importante determinar si las escuelas son realmente positivas, seguras y propicias para el aprendizaje y el crecimiento. Basándonos en los resultados de nuestro estudio plurianual sobre el clima escolar en la India, sostenemos que debe prestarse debida atención a las diferentes dimensiones del clima escolar si queremos alcanzar las metas establecidas en el ODS 4 de manera holística.

Introduction

One of the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is to ensure quality education for all. To truly achieve this goal in the context of the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the 21st century, it is no longer enough to focus only on the academic aspects of learning. The social and emotional aspects of an individual's life are equally important for success and well-being. A society made up of holistically-developed individuals is also one where there is equity and harmony.

There is fast-growing acknowledgement among education researchers and academics, too, that investing in the social and emotional development of students is as important as teaching them academic content. Global efforts are ongoing to understand what this would entail, how it could be acquired, and the mechanisms available to measure its acquisition.

Managing one's emotions and being cognizant of the emotions of others has become very important in today's world. The inability to manage one's emotions and understand others' emotions has huge costs, not just to individuals, but also to society.

Apart from its cost in terms of loss of efficient human capital, social and emotional incompetence

has larger implications for a linguistically and culturally diverse country such as India. To build and sustain an inclusive society, it is important to ensure that future generations are socially intelligent, and that they respect and celebrate diversity.

In India, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) highlighted 'a holistic approach to learning and development' to 'transcend divisions between physical and mental development, and between individual development and interaction with others' (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2005). This was further emphasized by the country's National Education Policy, published in 2020.

It was in this context that we embarked in 2017 on a multi-year research study, entitled Acquisition of Cognitive and Affective Skills in School Students in India (CASS), which aims (a) to carry out a large-scale assessment of the status of acquisition of cognitive and affective skills among India's schools and (b) to review existing tools and research in this area and develop a comprehensive range of culture-specific and high-quality assessment tools validated empirically with data to carry out the assessment. Accordingly, the study looked into four broad areas that would allow for the holistic development of a student, namely:

1 *Social and Emotional Skills of Students (SEL)*

This includes students' ability to understand their own emotions as well as those of others, handle relationships, and regulate their behavior and feelings.

2 *360-degree Attitude Audit (ATT)*

This includes student, teacher and parent attitudes towards their Self, their Significant Others, School Activities and Social Aspects.

3 *School Climate as perceived by Students, Teachers and Principals (SEQ)*

This includes understanding the school environment from the perspective of students, teachers and principals.

4 *Competency-based Learning Assessments in Language and Math (LAS)*

This includes a diagnostic learning assessment of student ability in Language and Math.

While SEL and LAS are skills, ATT looks into dispositions. SEQ checks for perceptions and gathers background details about the school environment.

This paper presents findings from the School Climate assessment that was carried out as part of the CASS study[1]. The study was

1 We hope to publish findings from the other areas of CASS in other papers.

carried out across government and private schools[2]; however, this paper focuses only on findings from government schools, which cater to the economically-weak sections of society.

Understanding school climate and its importance

While it is important to note that there is no single universal definition of school climate, in 1908, Perry became the first educationist to highlight the effect of a school's atmosphere on the teaching and learning process (Amedome, 2018).

Freiberg and Stein (1999) characterize school climate as the 'heart and soul of a school', which creates in stakeholders the desire to be at school each day. The National School Climate Council (NSCC) (2007), also in the U.S., characterizes school climate as 'the quality and character of school life'. School climate may, therefore, be taken to indicate how members of a school environment – namely the students, parents, teachers and other school personnel – interact and engage with each other and the school, the practices of school leaders and staff, as well as the conditions that support a safe and nurturing environment for learning and growth. The above definition of school climate holds good for the Indian context as well.

There is no single framework for measuring school climate. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive framework to measure school environments validly, Thapa et al (2013) consulted with area experts and reviewed 206 academic resources published since 1970. They propose five essential areas of focus:

- Safety (e.g., rules and norms, physical safety, social-emotional safety)
- Relationships (e.g., respect for diversity, school connectedness/ engagement, social support, leadership, and students' race/ ethnicity and their perceptions of school climate)
- Teaching and Learning (e.g., social emotional, ethical, and civic learning; service learning; support for academic learning; support for professional relationships; teachers' and students' perceptions of school climate)
- Institutional Environment (e.g., physical surroundings, resources, supplies)
- The School Improvement Process

The school climate report

School environment is a product of interactions between all individuals present in the school. It affects not only students but also a wide range of people including teachers, other school personnel, and parents, as well as the larger society. Therefore, it was felt that understanding and comparing the perspectives of students, teachers and principals was necessary to paint a realistic picture of school climate. This led to the development of three School Environment Questionnaires (SEQ) – one each for students, teachers and principals. These tools were developed in English and adapted in Hindi and Telugu.

These tools were administered to 38,000 students from grades[3] 4, 5, 7, and 9, across 550 government schools in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan, and to 3,000 students from 26 elite private schools in the five metro cities of Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai. Also, 1,200 teachers and 600 principals from government schools as well as 100 teachers and 26 principals from private schools participated in the study.

The SEQ tools were designed to collect information on school, teacher, principal and student background variables as well as school climate variables. Items were grouped by dimensions and sub-dimensions, to allow for detailed understanding of different specific aspects of school climate, and asked for responses on a four-point Likert scale. These allowed for the creation of not

2 The full-length reports of the study are available at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wGeJwlSjCvmUsCIk-GoQYUArLF9oruhe?usp=sharing

3 The findings are generalizable to the full school as the grades are carefully chosen to represent students across the developmental ages.

just one overall score, but scores for every dimension and sub-dimension to rate and assess a school's climate.

The Student SEQ assessed the dimensions of General School Environment, Relationships, Learning Climate and Attentiveness; the Teacher SEQ looked into the dimensions of General School Environment, Relationships, Teacher Beliefs & Development, and Attentiveness; and the Principal SEQ included the dimensions of General School Environment, Relationships, Principal Beliefs & Development, and Attentiveness.

Key findings from the school climate study in government schools

1 *School climate dimensions are significantly and positively related to academic learning.*

When regression analyses were carried out on the student SEQ responses with their scores on the language and math tests in the study, it was found that

Students who perceived schools to have a better General School Environment (Infrastructure & Resources, Order & Discipline, Safety) did better in language tests.

Students who perceived schools to have better Relationships (School Belongingness; Student & Leadership; Student & Teacher; Student & Peer; Student & Parent) and Learning Climate (Prosocial learning, Supportive Parents, Classroom Climate) did better in the math tests.

2 *Better school climate is related to higher student attentiveness, which is related to better academic performance.*

In order to check if students were paying attention to the task (questionnaire) given to them, a question was included in the paper that asked, 'If you are reading this, mark your response as "D".' This question was used as an indicator[4] for attentiveness

4 It is important to note that this finding is based on only one question asked in the paper. However, as there was a consistent trend as described in the graph above, we thought it worth reporting.

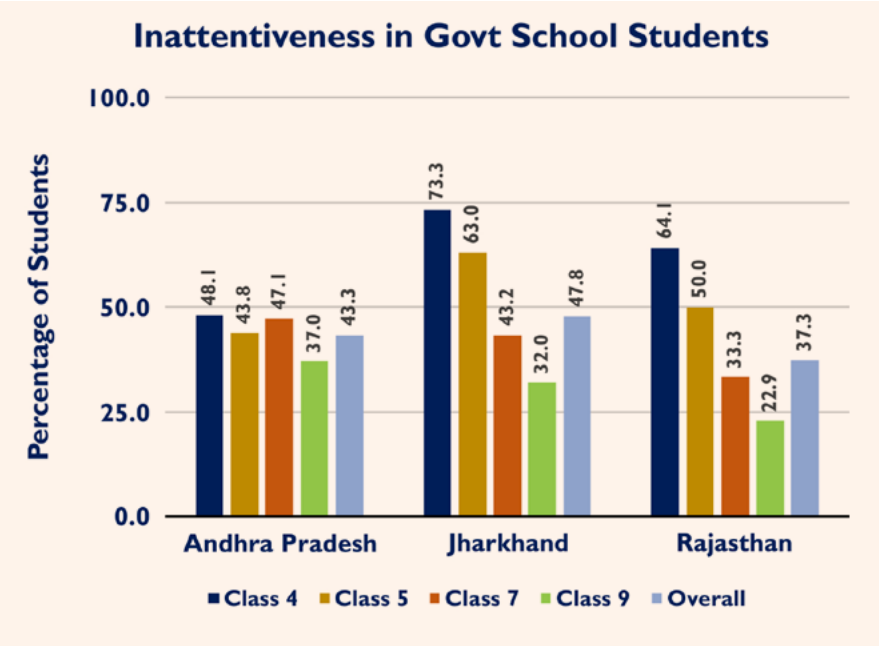

Figure 1: Inattentiveness among government school students

as it is very possible that students who marked this question incorrectly were either not paying attention to details, were disengaged with the happenings in class, or were bored, and hence marked a random answer.

On average, about 43% of students, 21% of teachers and 17% of principals in government schools across the three states were found to be inattentive to the questionnaire. It may be noted that among students, this proportion was seen to reduce progressively in higher grades.

There was a positive correlation between those who marked the attentiveness question correctly and their scores in the language and math tests in the study. These students also had a higher positive perception of their school climate.

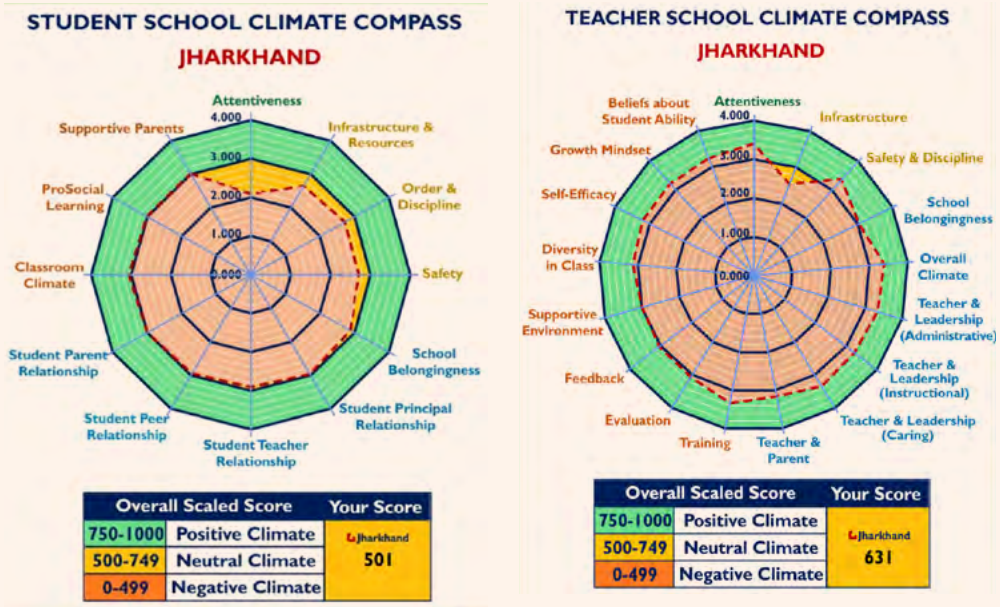

Figure 2: An example of school climate in government schools (Jharkhand state)

3 *Overall, students were found to be less positive about their school climate than their teachers and principals.*

In general, students have the least positive opinion about school climate while principals have the highest positive opinion. Teachers are usually found to be more positive than students but less positive than principals in their opinion of school climate. These trends were usually seen to repeat across states.

Figure 2 displays the school climate scores for students, teachers and principals in the state of Jharkhand, as an example. A scaled school climate score is calculated based on the subdimension scores. A score of 750–1000 is considered to represent a positive climate, 500–749 is neutral and below 500 is in the negative range.

Interpreting the figure: This School Climate Compass Chart represents the scaled school climate score for each group of respondents. The overall scaled score is calculated based on the scores for the sub-dimensions and the area covered by them. The larger the area covered in the chart, the more positive is the school climate. All sub-dimensions under consideration are labelled and scored out of 4. The sub-dimension score for each respondent group is highlighted with the area marked out in dashes. In the case of students, the chart is a multi-sided regular dodecagon, while for teachers and principals, it is a pentadecagon that represents the different sub-dimensions of the school climate.

4 *Schools are not seen as secure, positive or conducive to learning.*

One in every two students in government schools reports physical and/or verbal abuse from peers and/or teachers. Some also received differentiated treatment from teachers based on their gender, caste or religion. However, less than 10% principals and less than 16% teachers across the three states agree that teachers abuse students verbally or physically or treat them differently based on their gender, caste or religion.

35.9–51.4% students across the three states reported that there was an absence of clear rules against physical or verbal abuse in their schools. Being abused by schoolmates and teachers is also seen to positively correlate with the feeling of wanting to leave school.

The ramifications of feeling unsafe in school also spill over into a student's academic life, with students who report abuse also attaining lower academic scores by up to 8 percentage points.

5. *There are a number of red flags (warning signals indicating areas of concern requiring special attention) in student, teacher and principal responses to individual questions such as principals not having a growth mindset regarding leadership, parents not meeting the teacher or principal adequately, teachers having to spend their own money to buy learning resources, students damaging school property and absence of clear rules that will improve school safety.*

Red flags can help us identify strong negative beliefs of respondents regarding their school climate.

Respondents across students, teachers and principals indicated a lack of adequate infrastructure and resources such as overcrowded classrooms, not having a playground, library, computer labs, equipment and teachers for extracurricular activities. Given the profound consequences of inadequate infrastructure, there is an urgent need to improve the availability of resources in government schools.

Among principals, specifically, a large number believe that leadership ability must be inherited at birth and that learning new

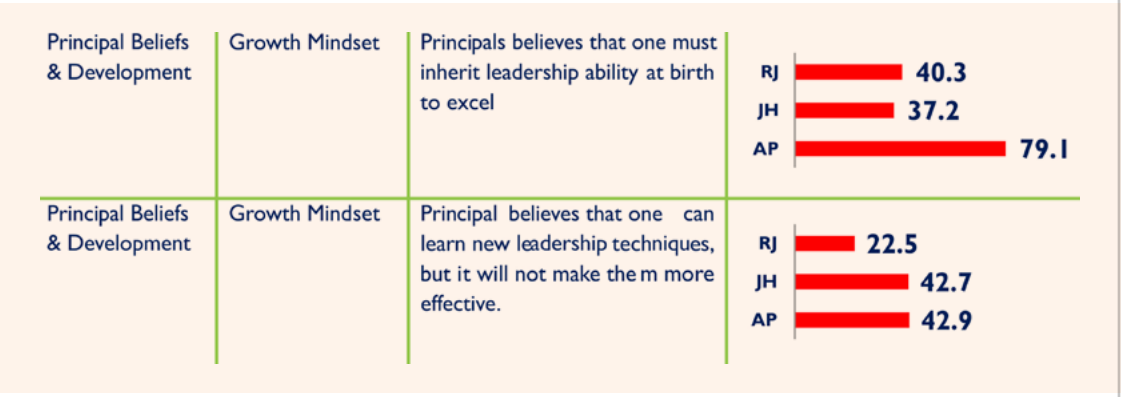

Figure 3. Some red flags in principal responses *The red bars display the state-wise response percentage of principals who 'STRONGLY AGREE' and 'AGREE' with the statements given*

leadership techniques will not make them more effective (Figure 3). This indicates a fixed mindset that leads to the belief that abilities are essentially inherent.

Discussion

An analysis of responses to the SEQ tool shows that student attentiveness to the task in the questionnaire is extremely low across the grades tested, although it was seen to improve in higher grades. Although research has suggested that people may be able to sustain their attention better as they grow older (Fortenbaugh et al., 2015), the large proportion of students inattentive to the task at hand across grades indicate that this is not just a neurological or brain development issue.

While it is possible that student inattentiveness stems from psychological stressors in the home environment, it is important to note that these students did not perceive their school climate as positive. It is, therefore, possible that their mind wandering is due to school-related issues, such as not feeling safe at school, troubled relationships at school and discomfort related to available infrastructure or resources. It could also mean that these students are not feeling engaged with the teaching learning process. The study found that students who were inattentive to the questionnaire also scored lower in the language and math tests they took along with the SEQ. Hence, recognizing that student inattentiveness is a problem and that it indicates poor engagement with academic learning, along with possibly a range of psychological issues, is the first step towards searching for ways to improve student learning outcomes.

Lack of student safety emerged as a strong concern in government schools, with over 50% of students reporting either physical or verbal abuse, or both, from schoolmates or teachers. The large number of students who reported facing verbal and/or physical abuse from their peers shows that bullying is a common occurrence in these schools. Research indicates that students who

are subjected to physical or verbal abuse by peers or school mates have lower academic achievement (Schwartz et al., 2005; Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010)symptoms of depression, and academic outcomes for 199 elementary schoolchildren (average age of 9.0 years; 105 boys, 94 girls; they may also develop unfavorable feelings, motivations, and behaviors toward school, such as school avoidance (Buhs, Ladd & Herald, 2006).

Responses to the SEQ indicate that over 40% of students across the three states have been abused by their teacher either physically (physical punishment) or verbally, or have been treated differently on the basis of their gender, caste or religion (which may affect the student's mental well-being). It is clear that although physical punishment and mental harassment of students by teachers has been outlawed in India by several legal and regulatory policies, notably the UN Child Rights Convention, of which India has been a signatory since 1992, and the 2009 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, the situation on the ground is very different (Agrasar, 2018). Even if one assumes the teacher's intention may be to enforce discipline and aid their students' learning (Agrasar, 2018), such punishments will have far-reaching consequences for the mental health of future generations. Further, teachers are often under immense strain and pressure of teaching and administrative work. Their own feelings of insecurity, unhappiness or lack of support are likely to be projected onto the students. It is crucial to look out for the well-being of teachers, deeply understand their challenges, and assist them in creating a place of growth.

The school climate tool checked whether students, teachers and principals felt a sense of belonging towards their school by asking if they felt safe in and around school, if they felt listened to, understood and valued, and if they wished to be elsewhere. A very large proportion – nearly one in every three students, one in every two or three teachers and principals – said that they wished to be elsewhere and reported not feeling safe. Research indicates that a sense of psychological safety is a critical aspect for teams to succeed (Edmondson, 2018). Google's Project Aristotle found that individuals in teams with higher psychological safety are 'less likely to leave the organization and are rated as effective twice as often by executives' (Google, n.d.). Schools cannot become effective places of learning until all stakeholders feel a sense of belonging and are motivated to exert themselves toward making the school a better place of learning. The data shows that many of these stakeholders have already 'bought out' of their accountability to the school and may be looking for an opportunity to move out if given the chance.

Highlighting the role played by infrastructure, Earthman (1998) notes that 'the better the built environment is, the more positive the impact on students' tests'. Teachers are also less likely to remain absent from schools that have better infrastructure (Kremer et al., 2005). Countries like Finland, believed to have one of the best education systems in the world, show that an important prerequisite for effective learning is to ensure that students play and have space for recreation. In India, too, the Delhi government has focussed on revamping the infrastructure of its schools, including the construction of new classrooms (Sahoo, 2020). There has been a move to make the learning process for students more engaging through e-modules and SMART classrooms, while teachers have been given the opportunity to attend training programs by some of the world's top educators (Sahoo, 2020). These policies have not only resulted in a greater sense of belonging and motivation for those involved, but have also translated into a significant increase in the pass percentage of students from government schools. In fact, 2020 marked the fifth consecutive year that Delhi's government schools achieved a better pass percentage for grade 12 students than its private schools (hindustantimes.com, 2020). During a school day in India, students, teachers and principals spend no less than 6–9 hours in school, which is nearly half their waking hours. As schools become second homes to them, it is important to recognize the underlying need for individuals to have access to resources and feel good about being part of a caring system.

A very large number of principals who responded to the SEQ tools believe that they must inherit leadership ability at birth, and that learning new leadership techniques will not make them more effective. Halpin and Croft (1963) explain that the conduct of the principal sets the tone for the school's atmosphere (Amedome, 2018). Anecdotal evidence from India and elsewhere indicates that some principals in government schools create extremely positive school environments, with high levels of student achievement, even in the face of a lack of resources and in adverse conditions. When explored further, it appears that these leaders are different from others with regard to their mindset. Leaders with a fixed mindset believe talent is inborn and that basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits (Gottfredson & Reina, 2020). As a result, such individuals do not put in the effort to learn or become better leaders. In contrast, individuals who display a growth mindset believe that abilities can be worked on and developed. While the role of government policy in establishing schools as positive places for learning cannot be underestimated, not everything can be created by top-down dictates. School principals have a crucial leadership role to play in creating a positive climate in their schools – by taking on challenges and implementing the most effective problem-solving strategies, in persistently seeking to accomplish goals, and in establishing a caring and sensitive prosocial environment in school. Any leadership training provided to government school principals should adequately focus on the development of growth mindsets.

A growing body of research shows that building effective partnerships between parents and schools leads to improved learning outcomes. Teachers and principals who participated in the study report that parents do not regularly meet them. This needs to be addressed through measures such as more parent-teacher meetings, activation of the SMCs mandated by the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, and sensitization of parents on how their involvement plays a role in their child's learning and well-being. Regular parental involvement with school is likely to result in positive relationships and trust between the school and families. It will support children's development and contribute toward the creation of a safe school environment for the student.

In order to disseminate the findings from the School Climate report and to bring them into the mainstream discourse of school education, we organized a Discussion Series[5] that was well-attended by senior government officials, educationists, school principals, teachers, researchers, and other organizations working to improve school education. The findings were accepted as highlighting the ground realities, with the potential to initiate larger advocacy around the issues related to school climate in schools across India. The former Education Secretary of the Government of India, who released the report, urged stakeholders not only to accept but also to own the report's recommendations.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings and their implications for a school's climate, we put forth the following recommendations:

1 *Use interactive and engaging pedagogy to increase attentiveness in classrooms*

Student perception of Learning Climate (Prosocial learning, Supportive Parents, Classroom Climate) was found to be the most positively correlated with higher attentiveness. Classrooms that are positive, inquiry-based and that provide hands-on learning are likely to lead to increased student attentiveness. Schools and teaching faculty may explore interactive and engaging teaching learning processes that better engage students with the happenings of the classroom, especially in the lower grades. Teachers should be equipped with pedagogical practices to implement constructivist methods of learning in their classrooms.

5 The links to the Discussion Series can be found on our YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuttZSuqdrJxSss-6GMTTA

2 *Improve student attentiveness using mindfulness training*

Mindfulness training strengthens attention and protects against mind-wandering. Regular practice of mindfulness will in due course enable the student to overcome stress, calm the mind, improve self-awareness and develop resilience. Perhaps most importantly, the practice of mindfulness is easy to learn and implement in classrooms.

3 *Focus explicitly on inculcation of empathy/compassion through the school curriculum*

The excessive violence happening in schools may have its roots in students not perceiving others as similar to themselves. This may be countered by actively developing empathy, which will give students the ability to experience and understand what others feel. School curricula may have explicit instruction and practice for the inculcation of empathy. Conversations about acceptance, diversity and belongingness through activities like circle time and story-telling will enable the creation of safe and culturally-responsive schools.

4 *Establish, communicate and implement clear rules for safety*

Clear ground rules need to be laid out, communicated and followed with respect to 'what is admissible behavior and what is not' about bullying and discrimination in various forms (for example, gender, caste, economic status) among school mates. A complaint redressal mechanism with a dedicated student committee or staff member should be put in place to look into any such complaints on bullying. Anti-bullying campaigns that reward sensitive and empathetic actions may be conducted regularly.

5 *Appropriately allocate a budget for school infrastructure and resources*

Governments need to allocate appropriate budgets for the improvement of school infrastructure and resources.

6 *Carry out regular and periodic school climate surveys for feedback and to assess progress*

Regular School Climate assessments need to be conducted to get feedback from students, teachers, and principals. These assessments are a source of information for school authorities and governments on school health. The feedback loop allows for the effective alignment of resources by highlighting the most urgent and important needs of students, teachers, and principals. It can also feed into an accountability system. School Climate reports for individual schools can provide diagnosis for identifying action areas at the school level.

7 *Understand and assist teacher well-being*

It may not be enough for school systems to only focus on assisting student well-being. Given that principals and teachers are employees of schools, their well-being – such as their relationships in school and their feeling of belonging – may well be considered an important aspect of a healthy climate in the workplace.

Conclusion

Most education policies focus on the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, nutrition in school, teacher salaries, teacher training and recruitment. In the quest to provide quality education under the SDGs, the need for acquisition of foundational and higher order skills, including interpersonal and social skills, is now being slowly understood across the world.

In this paper, we touched upon the various dimensions of school climate and discussed the obstacles that may stand in the way of creating an environment conducive to an individual's overall growth and provided recommendations for schools to become positive and nurturing places that allow for realizing SDG 4 as achieving holistic, high-quality learning for all students.

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6

A Peruvian SEL Community of Practice: Putting the care of emotions on the national education agenda

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ABSTRACT

In Peru, as in many other parts of the world, COVID-19 has generated a crisis, not only in health but also in the social dimension. Educational activity has continued remotely and, therefore, students have started to practice various kinds of socio-emotional learning (SEL). It is important, with what the world is going through, to firm up spaces that allow dialogue around SEL and different actions to become inscribed in education and society. This challenging moment is also a chance to empathize and co-create public health solutions with different kinds of citizens, evaluate the protocols, and monitor the systems available for returning to face-to-face education and promoting SEL in school, media and social networks.

A Community of Practice, promoted by a team from the Horizontes program (UNESCO Peru), Notre Dame University in the U.S., and Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University, a Jesuit university based in Lima, has enabled discussion of approaches to SEL as an entry point to understand the link that unites child and adolescent development with education and facilitated the sharing of reference frameworks around measurement tools, educational practices and lessons from programs related to SEL. In this article, we examine how working within a community of experts can lead to a new way to approach education in a crisis context.

Une communauté de pratique SEL péruvienne : Inscrire la prise en charge des émotions à l'agenda de l'éducation nationale

Au Pérou, comme dans de nombreuses autres régions du monde, le COVD-19 a généré une crise, non seulement dans le domaine de la santé, mais aussi dans la dimension sociale. L'activité éducative s'est poursuivie à distance et, par conséquent, les étudiants ont commencé à pratiquer divers types d'apprentissage socio-émotionnel (ASE). Il est important, avec ce que le monde est en train de vivre, de consolider les espaces qui permettent le dialogue autour de l'ASE et les différentes actions qui s'inscrivent dans l'éducation et la société. Ce moment difficile est également l'occasion de faire preuve d'empathie et de co-créer des solutions de santé publique avec différents types de citoyens, d'évaluer les protocoles et de surveiller les systèmes disponibles pour revenir à l'éducation en face à face et promouvoir l'ASE à l'école, dans les médias et les réseaux sociaux.

Une communauté de pratique, promue par une équipe du programme Horizontes (UNESCO Pérou), de l'Université Notre Dame aux États-Unis et de l'Université Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, une université jésuite basée à Lima, a permis de discuter des approches de l'ASE comme point d'entrée pour comprendre le lien qui unit le développement de l'enfant et de l'adolescent à l'éducation et a facilité le partage de cadres de référence autour des outils de mesure, des pratiques éducatives et des leçons tirées des programmes liés à l'ASE. Dans cet article, nous examinons comment le travail au sein d'une communauté d'experts peut conduire à une nouvelle façon d'aborder l'éducation dans un contexte de crise.

Una Comunidad de Práctica SEL peruana: Poniendo el cuidado de las emociones en la agenda educativa nacional

En Perú, como en muchas otras partes del mundo, el COVD-19 ha generado una crisis, no sólo en la salud, sino también en la dimensión social. La actividad educativa ha continuado a distancia y, por lo tanto, los y las estudiantes han comenzado a practicar diversos tipos de aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés). Es importante, con lo que el mundo está viviendo, consolidar espacios que permitan el diálogo en torno al SEL y que las diferentes acciones se adopten en la educación y en la sociedad. Este momento desafiante es también una oportunidad para empatizar y co-crear soluciones de salud pública con diferentes tipos de ciudadanos y ciudadanas, evaluar los protocolos y monitorear los sistemas disponibles para volver a la educación presencial y promover el SEL en la escuela, los medios y las redes sociales.

Una Comunidad de Práctica, promovida por un equipo del programa Horizontes (UNESCO Perú), la Universidad de Notre Dame en Estados Unidos y la Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, una universidad jesuita con sede en Lima, ha permitido la discusión de los enfoques de SEL como punto de partida para comprender el vínculo que une el desarrollo infantil y adolescente con la educación y ha facilitado el intercambio de marcos de referencia en torno a herramientas de medición, prácticas educativas y lecciones de programas relacionados con el SEL. En este artículo, examinamos cómo el trabajo dentro de una comunidad de expertos puede conducir a una nueva forma de abordar la educación en un contexto de crisis.

The educational outlook

The results of the PISA 2018 test indicated that Peru ranked 64th out of a total of 77 participating countries (Ministry of Education, 2019). In the previous measurement, in 2015, Peru had ranked second to last in Latin America, above the Dominican Republic (Ministry of Education, 2017). These results are explained to a great extent by the low priority given to the education sector. At the beginning of the century, Peru dedicated 2% of its GDP to education. In 2015, this rose to 3.97%, an increase considered historic in the country. Together with prioritizing investment in infrastructure, the commitment to strengthening the teaching career and the national debate on curricular reform, as well as a prioritization of higher education, led to progress under what was known as an educational reform under the government of President Ollanta Humala (2011–16). This can be summarized as an effort to guarantee a social infrastructure for learning: assigning the required human capital (appointment of school directors, competitions for teachers with meritocratic standards, appointment of classroom assistants), design of management tools at different levels (national curricular reform, among others), and improvement and maintenance of physical infrastructure.

In the past five years, although the sector has continued to promote initiatives to strengthen public education, institutional instability has had an impact on the State's ability to generate long-term initiatives with an impact on learning and education. Between the end of 2016 and 2020, Peru had eight ministers of education, of which four were summoned by Congress for questioning.

With the arrival of the pandemic, the strategy turned to crisis response and forced the virtualization of classes in a country where 7 out of 10 students do not have internet. Gaps in access to education increased and it is estimated that, in 2020, 230,000 students dropped out of school. From March 2020 (the official start date of the school year in Peru) until the first quarter of 2021, schools did not reopen their doors. In April 2021, classes

resumed in a targeted manner in 9 of the 25 regions of the country. The situation of disparity and the loss of face-to-face schooling placed Peru in a situation of precariousness and educational emergency. Recovering lost opportunities and returning to face-to-face schooling, in a country with the most deaths per capita for COVID-19 during the first phase of the pandemic and in a year of changes in government, have become national priorities.

Putting complementary education on the agenda: A paradigm shift

The international network has had an impact on the creation of the SEL community of practice (CP) in Peru, making socio-emotional learning a priority issue. The Community of Practice in Socioemotional Learning in Peru – an initiative coordinated by the University of Notre Dame, the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University, and the UNESCO Peru Horizontes Program – began work in early 2020. From 2021, its work has also involved the Institute for Research and Educational Policies of the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University.

The CP was created in response to international demand to put on the public agenda a discussion that goes beyond the social infrastructure for learning and which recognizes the competencies and skills that students require for life, both for the impact this in terms of the human collective as well as for students to progress from primary to secondary education and from basic to higher education. A consensus on the need to move education beyond the conditions and guarantees of learning has led to the discussion of a framework for complementary education.

Before 2020, Peru had no experience of systematizing and discussing progress about socio-emotional learning (SEL) at national level, although certain initiatives had been carried out by international institutions such as the World Bank, which in 2015 worked on the Toolbox for the Development of Socio-emotional Learning initiative, and by UNESCO Peru, which in 2018

proposed to strengthen education in 62 rural schools through its Horizontes program. The private sector had also witnessed in 2011 the initiative of the Ruwasunchis school, while in the field of extracurricular training, the dance school D1 and the theater, circus and music school La Tarumba had been working with social-emotional learning for many years. So, the newly formed CP was able to call on several initiatives that had explored education through SEL (Table 1).

The work of these institutions prompted their convocation by the CP to join a network of specialists to discuss, share knowledge, and build an agenda to reach a consolidation of practices. The CP began during the pandemic, almost at the same time as the declaration of a state of national emergency and the mandatory social isolation of the population. Social isolation represented, in many cases, a stagnation or delay in the development of socio-emotional learning, causing fear, misunderstanding, depression or apathy. For this reason, the situation forces us to talk about socio-emotional learning linked to the health emergency. And, subsequently, within the CP there was the idea of confronting other issues after quarantine, such as a return to in-person classes and meetings, emotional containment, and resilience around loss.

The number of CP members, which was 100 from 29 different public, private, and international institutions, has varied over time. It has had only one face-to-face meeting. When the state of emergency was promulgated in March 2020, it was decided to move the CP meetings online. Since then, more than 40 meetings have been held with an average participation of 35 specialists. Members agreed on three subgroups that bring together the different interests of the CP: namely, evaluation, practice and advocacy. Various national and international presentations are shared in the meetings, giving a view of different experiences around SEL and allowing constant learning and collaboration.

Community of practice in socio-emotional skills in Peru		
PUBLIC SECTOR		• Ministerio de Educación • Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social • Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo • Oficina de Medición de la Calidad de los Aprendizajes • Consejo Nacional de Educación
PRIVATE SECTOR	**Internships linked to education**	• Horizontes - UNESCO • Asociación Pukllasunchis • Fundación Wiese • Futura Schools • Tarea Asociación de Publicaciónes educativas • Enseña Perú • Sembrando juntos • Alternativa
	College and Universities	• Innova Teaching Schools • Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya • Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú • Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola
	Practices linked to art	• RevelArte – D1 • La Tarumba
	Practices linked to Communities Organizations	• Servicios Educativos El Agustino • Javier Echevarría Consultores • i4d: Innovación para el Desarrollo • Consultorías independientes
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	**They provide an external view of national projects, share different initiatives and innovative proposals on HSE**	• Porticus • Universidad Notre Dame • World vision • Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia • Instituto Alianza • Public Changers

Table 1: The Community of Practice in socio-emotional skills in Peru

A Peruvian pedagogy: Approaches

The SEL discussion is a worldwide discussion, and the main references and evidence for the CP come from contexts that are different to that of Peru. A range of approaches has been pursued, with a view to developing a Peruvian proposal for a complementary pedagogy that develops SEL.

The first approach is the intercultural: Peru has 44 indigenous peoples and more than 2,700 registered communities. In addition, 25% of the population identifies as indigenous and more than 60% as mestizo, according to figures from the last national census. For this reason, a discussion on education cannot be separated from the management of diversity in schools and classrooms. CP members have pointed out the absence of reference to this discussion in the country and, in discussions with international experts, this question is recurrent.

The second approach is the territorial. Inequality in education in the country can be explained, to a great extent, by geography. The rural environment presents multiple challenges in terms of educational service: according to the latest figures, about 20% of the population live in rural areas (INEI, 2018), where it is estimated that 1 in 4 high school students is behind in school compared to 7 out of 100 students with the same situation in urban areas (MINEDU, 2018). This discussion is usually absent in other countries, particularly non-Latin American countries, but, in Peru, it is a core issue that even divides academics and generates professional specializations and institutional designs. The Horizontes (Horizons) program is one example, providing a renewed high school for 4,942 students around ages 12 to 19, and qualifying 430 teachers and managers in the rural areas of four regions of the country (UNESCO, 2018).

A third is the life stage approach. The different priority given to each stage of basic education has generated a common vision that seeks to target students who drop out of education, with greater numbers in secondary education than in primary. For this

reason, the need arises to attend to students in the early years in a different way from adolescent students. Therefore, the skills developed at each stage must also be different and must be adapted to the requirements of each age. The importance of cross-cutting approaches to gender and disability is also recognized.

A fourth approach could be called systemic. For the CP, this has been particularly relevant insofar as it considers that the discussion of the provision of educational service is not only a matter of concern for the Ministry of Education but also requires a network of organizations that provide feedback to guarantee educational experiences including the development of SEL. It is this that has allowed the development of our network of specialists who share experiences, knowledge, and concerns, and who collaborate to put the issue on the national agenda.

All four approaches can be seen in the work of the CP. The subgroup of practices addresses different educational proposals that work with SEL in different learning spaces. The measurement subgroup considers the different contexts in which the projects or initiatives are developed. It is important to consider the different educational realities that we have in Peru and the different stages of life that human beings go through. The advocacy subgroup addresses issues with a systemic perspective, evaluating ideas and transforming them into realistic proposals.

Components of a pedagogy for further education: Working subgroups

Within its first year, the three CP subgroups have addressed different aspects of an innovative pedagogy:

First, the practices subgroup addressed issues of diverse and multifaceted pedagogy at the national and international level.

Second, the measurement subgroup explored how to know if this new paradigm would achieve different results. A lot of discussion about measurement tools has taken place at the international level and these are being adapted at national level.

Finally, the advocacy subgroup has pursued an agenda for complementary education at the level of schools and educational projects but also at national level, in particular in dialogue with the Ministry of Education.

Practices around SEL

It is important to know and discuss implementation of the new, diverse and multifaceted pedagogy. For this reason, one of the first practices to be shared was the experience of D1, a dance school that includes SEL in its training programs: personal development, interpersonal development, and social learning. The methodology is focused on the very process that the arts provide to develop SEL. D1 defines art as a mediator to work with people in vulnerable situations, a vehicle for the transmission of social norms and values, creative and disruptive thinking, and handling deep emotions and SEL such as self-esteem, self-control, empathy, and social competence. Along the same lines, the experience of La Tarumba, a school of Theater Circus and Music, also based in Lima, presented the project Cuerda Firme, and an innovative training program aimed at vulnerable young people who seek to develop their SEL using the circus as a methodology. La Tarumba has an identity development approach, with a focus on transformation through theater, circus, and music. This institution defines five areas of SEL: Commitment, Teamwork, Communication, Creativity and Self-esteem, highlighting that these are a priority within their activities and linking them to the final output which is a show for the public, family, friends, and guests.

Both of these cultural spaces of extracurricular education demonstrate the developent of young people through self-knowledge, the construction of identity and the management of SEL. This translates into individuals with greater commitment, proactivity, and the capacity for self-regulation. On the other hand, in the formal education sector, we find that 34% of grade 3 pupils and 45% of first grade high school students have experienced

symptoms of depression and anxiety during the year 2020. This is because of the increase in stress and economic and family problems linked to quarantine and loss of family, friends and coworkers (Guardia, 2021). In response to this situation, the practices and results of the D1 and La Tarumba schools are presented as main contributions to the discussion around the importance of the development of HSEs for groups interested in promoting the educational reform initiated in 2011 in the formal education sector.

In this group, the third experience is that of Art and Dialogue for Peace, an initiative that brings together cultural organizations and educational institutions from various districts of Lima, which are committed to art, education, dialogue, and collaboration as a creative force for social transformation. This initiative, led by an NGO called ProDiálogo, has two components: Youth and Culture, and School and Community Coexistence. They focus on developing SEL through cultural arts settings. Due to the pandemic, the experience has had to be transformed, for which they met with the leaders. Before the COVID-19 lockdown, they used to have collaborative, in-person workshops with participants, but with the lockdown they had to design virtual workshops and strengthen virtual tools to communicate with students. They have made more use of WhatsApp, recorded videos, and had phone calls with the teenagers and their families. Also, an attempt was made to maintain the links that had been built over several years in a virtual way, with two lines of action: socio-emotional accompaniment and collaborative production of cultural pieces.

Measurement in SEL

The measurement subgroup discussed different national and international evaluation initiatives. One of the initiatives presented during CP meetings was done at the national level. A research was carried out in Piura and Cuzco by the University of Notre Dame, in collaboration with UNESCO, into 'Local perceptions on socio-emotional learning of adolescents and young people'. A

qualitative–ethnographic methodology was used, in which semi-structured interviews were applied in order to know more about the skills that families and students value. The 136 participants were high school students, teachers, principals, and parents. Results showed that adolescents and young people are doing well, which is associated with the idea of success of the person (migration, having a home, getting along with the community, standing out in the school). What's more, the skills identified as the most important by students, teachers, parents, and mothers, are dedication and responsibility. Also, different activities were identified that showed that adolescents and young people are doing well: they are achieving what they themselves perceive as positive. This initiative, as well as others that have become known in the CP, involve sharing different ways of measuring SEL. Community members discuss the instruments, their relevance, and the contexts in which they can be used, depending on the population.

Advocacy in SEL

The advocacy subgroup has essentially discussed the importance of creating an impact to inspire people in general to strengthen the SEL. For this, the members sought to strengthen strategic alliances with private institutions with a common vision, as well as with government institutions. This joint work allows the development of different proposals that imply and/or recognize the importance of SEL in the development of people in the different contexts in which they work. As a result, a common proposal is generated that affects the level of schools, educational projects and, also, at the national level. The national profile of SEL is thereby increased.

The need to consider the role of SEL in teachers' practices has also been raised. In 2020, a dialogue was held with the in-service teacher training department of the Ministry of Education who commented that, in the context of a health emergency, training has had to be changed. In meetings with the 25 subnational governments, the importance of meeting the SEL needs of the

teachers was identified, for which they used semi-face-to-face modules on socio-emotional development. These lasted for eight hours over three sessions. Likewise, it was sought to give a space to teachers to develop their ability to manage stress, emotions and soft skills so that interaction with students and parents is more effective. In 2021, working with Flor Pablo, a former Minister of Education and actual congresswoman, the CP is discussing how to develop a legal proposal on SEL. This dialogue has made evident the need to create new institutional tools to help the work of teachers in the classrooms and school communities.

From experience to knowledge

The work carried out by the three subgroups has allowed the development of different products in the first year of creation:

- The evaluation subgroup produced a report on methodological guidelines and recommendations on SEL measurement, based on a review of national and international instruments from contexts similar to that of Peru.
- Within the framework of the practice subgroup, a system was created in order to document SEL activities in institutions, schools and initiatives, so that the evidence could be seen and understood.
- Regarding the advocacy subgroup, a resource hub was developed, which is a compilation of materials on SEL from member organizations, including virtual materials.

In the future, the CP expects to make all these virtual repositories open to the public in order to motivate discussion around the topics within the educational community.

From an exchange of experiences to an exchange of knowledge

The achievement of the first year (2020–21) must be seen in the light of the conditions and opportunities that exist for the CP as an epistemic community. Epistemic communities are defined as those communities that share references and that produce and disseminate new paradigms. The activities have made it possible to generate dynamics that are now contributing to the generation and dissemination of expert knowledge that, it is hoped, will stimulate the discussion on education in Peru.

The initial discussions of the CP revolved around sharing a set of experiences that sought to develop SEL in all those who participated in different training experiences. After agreeing that ours was a shared effort that would go beyond cognitive learning, the community has begun to discuss the knowledge required to improve interventions incorporating SEL in Peru.

The CP has emerged as an international collaboration initiative in order to generate a national community in Peru. In its first year, it communicated with 10 international and 14 national initiatives, making it possible to take part in discussion with international organizations such as the OECD, national organizations in the U.S., and at regional level in other Latin American countries. In particular, discussion on measurement has learned from experiences in Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. This has also made it possible to understand collaboration processes between the public and private sectors and to put complementary pedagogy on the agenda in the region.

The challenges remain significant. Institutional instability is no minor issue when it comes to generating an agenda for advocacy. The short-term characteristics of national planning in Peru can relegate SEL to the background due to the need for an emergency plan that responds to the context of the pandemic. Finally, efforts are required to guarantee the material and human resources for the longer-term sustainability and continuity of the CP.

Name	Objective	Description
Toolbox for the Development of Socio-Emotional Learning – World Bank (2015)	The development of socio-emotional learning such as empathy, assertiveness, perseverance and conflict management in students; as well as identifying the relationship between thought, emotion and action, achieving their own regulation, and contributing to their well-being and positive coexistence.	A program that teaches social and emotional learning to elementary and middle school students through learning sessions with recreational activities using guide material, both for teachers and students.
Horizontes – UNESCO (2018)	To ensure that adolescents in rural public schools complete their secondary studies by enhancing their talents, empowering their socio-emotional learning and strengthening their individual identity and intercultural citizenship. Likewise, that they obtain relevant educational training that is complemented by an enabling productive technical training to give them the necessary tools to develop life projects and continue their trajectory impacting their community.	An initiative focused on rethinking the meaning and role of rural secondary education and its contribution to the trajectory of rural adolescents and young people through an education that enables their life projects and the development of their potential and talent.
Ruwasunchis (2011)	To provide tools that allow adolescents to learn to identify problems in their schools and propose solutions for children to find themselves in a safe and non-violent space where they can have fun and learn. They aim to generate a sense of feeling loved for who they are, not for their achievements. At the same time, it seeks to contribute to the empowerment of women to support their families. Finally, it seeks to generate opportunities for study, work and income for the education of children and the construction of their own houses.	A project that creates meeting spaces for the discovery of capacities and opportunities for the development of people in vulnerable communities along with social learning for life through three community growth and development programs. Boys and girls, adolescents and women weavers learn about resilience, self-esteem, and the freedom to create and express; they work on emotional intelligence, leadership and affective communication and participate in workshops on weaving, management, artistic expressions, sports, and self-knowledge.
Dance school D1 (No precise date)	To strengthen the socio-emotional learning of adolescents through self-knowledge and interaction with others, as well as developing self-regulation habits through the acquisition of artistic skills and, as a result, generating opportunities for people to improve their quality of life by connecting individual with social transformation.	A cultural association oriented towards social transformation and cultural promotion. It began with the ambition to train youth leaders from marginal sectors of Peru. An agreement was signed with the Regional Directorate of Education of Metropolitan Lima to promote the human and socio-emotional development in 7,800 students in the second and third year of high school through the 'Transformation of learning through movement and expressive arts' program.
La Tarumba School of Theater, Circus and Music (2014–19)	To train 1,500 young people in the region through circus arts to develop socio-emotional learning with a specific focus on their identity, allowing them to access better employment. Companies, for their part, will have more committed and proactive workers, with less turnover of personnel and therefore better results.	Cuerda Firme is an innovative training program where young participants can strengthen their socio-emotional learning through the arts, especially the circus. In addition, they receive advice on job searching techniques.

Table 2: Earlier SEL initiatives in Peru

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7

Starting from square two: Building a cohesive national SEL framework[1]

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ABSTRACT

In response to the influx of some 488,000 Syrian refugee children since 2011, international and local NGOs working in Lebanon have provided formal and non-formal education services designed to promote both children's academic skills and their social and emotional learning (SEL) skills. However, the majority of SEL-related frameworks and materials used are typically grounded in theory and research from western, educated, industrialized, rich, democracies (WEIRD), which are not always coherent or aligned with Lebanese societal cultures and norms. Towards the goal of generating contextually meaningful evidence to guide program and policy decision-making in Lebanon, our research-practice-policy partnership has engaged in a rigorous, multi-method, iterative process to develop and contextualize an SEL framework for children in Lebanese primary schools. In this paper, we will describe the process of engaging experts in education, psycho-social support, and SEL from the Government of Lebanon, World Learning, Harvard's EASEL Lab, and NYU Global TIES to empirically code existing frameworks and identify priority SEL constructs. We will reflect on the development of systemic and transformative relationships across partners as a means toward contextualization, and conclude by sharing a first version of a National SEL Framework for Lebanon.

We would like to acknowledge the incredible contribution of Dr Samar Ahmadieh not only for this project, but for her storied dedication to the children of Lebanon. Her contribution to the fields of psychology and education cannot be overstated. Her passing was a shock and terrible loss for her friends, family, and colleagues. We hope to honor her memory by continuing the incredible work she dedicated her life to.

Repartir de la case départ : construire un cadre national cohérent pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie.

En réponse à l'afflux de quelque 488 000 enfants réfugiés syriens depuis 2011, les ONG internationales et locales travaillant au Liban ont fourni des services d'éducation formelle et non formelle conçus pour promouvoir à la fois les compétences scolaires des enfants et leurs compétences d'apprentissage social et émotionnel (ASE). Cependant, la majorité des cadres et des matériels liés à ASE utilisés sont généralement fondés sur la théorie et la recherche des démocraties blanches, éduquées, industrialisées, riches (WEIRD), qui ne sont pas toujours cohérentes ou alignées avec les cultures et les normes sociétales libanaises. Dans le but de générer des preuves contextuellement significatives pour guider la prise de décision en matière de programmes et de politiques au Liban, notre partenariat recherche-pratique-politique s'est engagé dans un

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processus rigoureux, multi-méthodes et itératif pour développer et contextualiser un cadre ASE pour les enfants des écoles primaires libanaises. Dans cet article, nous décrirons le processus d'engagement des experts en éducation, en soutien psychosocial et en ASE du gouvernement libanais, de World Learning, du laboratoire EASEL de Harvard et de NYU Global TIES pour codifier empiriquement les cadres existants et identifier les constructions ASE prioritaires. Nous réfléchirons au développement de relations systémiques et transformatrices entre les partenaires comme moyen de contextualisation, et nous conclurons en partageant une première version d'un cadre national ASE pour le Liban.

Empezar de cero: construyendo un marco de SEL nacional y cohesivo

En respuesta al ingreso de unos 488.000 niños refugiados sirios desde 2011 en el Líbano, las ONG internacionales y locales han proporcionado servicios de educación formal y no formal diseñados para promover tanto las habilidades académicas de niños y niñas como sus habilidades de aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés). Sin embargo, la mayoría de los marcos y materiales relacionados al SEL suelen basarse en teoría e investigación en democracias occidentales, con altos índices de educación, industrializadas y ricas (WEIRD), que no siempre están alineadas con las culturas y normas sociales libanesas. Con el objetivo de generar evidencia contextualmente significativa para guiar la toma de decisiones de programas y políticas en el Líbano, nuestra colaboración de investigación práctica-política ha seguido un proceso de carácter riguroso, multimétodo e iterativo para desarrollar y contextualizar un marco de SEL para niños y niñas en escuelas primarias libanesas. En este documento, describimos el proceso de participación de expertos en educación, en apoyo psicosocial y en SEL del Gobierno del Líbano, World Learning, EASEL Lab de Harvard y NYU Global TIES para codificar empíricamente

los marcos existentes e identificar los constructos de SEL prioritarios. Reflexionamos sobre el desarrollo de relaciones sistémicas y transformadoras entre los y las colaboradores como medio para la contextualización, y en la conclusión compartimos la primera versión del Marco Nacional de SEL del Líbano.

Why develop an SEL framework for Lebanon?

Ensuring high-quality formal schooling at scale is difficult under the best of circumstances. In the circumstance in which a country's formal school population doubles within four years – as it has in Lebanon due to an influx of some 488,000 Syrian refugee children of which over 200,000 entered the Lebanese public education system – ensuring the quality of service delivery for both Lebanese and Syrian children is an unprecedented challenge. In this context, international and local NGOs working in Lebanon have helped to provide formal and non-formal education services and strategies designed to promote both children's academic skills as well as their social and emotional skills and competencies: the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors that help children live better, more fulfilling, and prosperous lives (hereafter social and emotional skills). Known by many different names – social and emotional learning activities, psycho-social support (PSS), child protection, inclusive education, life skills, child online and digital safety, classroom management and positive discipline techniques – these strategies and their corresponding frameworks have in common an explicit or implicit focus on promoting social and emotional skills. However, such strategies vary greatly in the actual skills (and the names of the skills) they focus on building, by which activities and in which settings, and with which children. Such a 'jingle-jangle' effect can lead to confusion, miscommunication, and ultimately fragmented efforts across the diverse stakeholders working to support children's holistic learning at national scale (Blythe, 2018).

In addition, many SEL-related competency frameworks, curricula, materials, and assessments in use in Lebanon are grounded in theory and research from western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic (WEIRD) contexts, which are not always coherent or aligned with Lebanese societal cultures and norms (Henrich et al., 2010). Indeed, emergent efforts to better understand how well SEL frameworks in the West align with those in developing and crisis contexts have shown that there are key differences in definition and priority of such competencies. For example, qualitative research conducted in Tanzania showed that a widely used SEL framework developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) largely missed a set of competencies related to social responsibility that were highly valued and valuable within that context (Jukes et al., 2018). At best, the opportunity to promote such valued competencies would have been completely missed if a program or measurement tool based on the CASEL framework alone had been implemented and used in that context. At worst, a lack of appropriate contextualization may unleash a cascade of stress, alienation, and disengagement in families, schools, and communities, especially in a country struggling with social and sectarian tension (Abu-Amsha, 2018; Burde et al., 2017; Faour, 2007).

In response to such risks, World Learning, the Lebanese Center for Education Research and Development (CERD), the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education Department of Orientation and Guidance within the Directorate of General Education (DGE-DOPS), the Harvard EASEL Lab, and NYU Global TIES for Children (NYU-TIES) have been working in partnership to develop a national SEL framework for children in grades 1 to 6 in Lebanon. This framework is intended to guide the implementation of contextualized SEL programming and curricula and to inform the development of formative and summative assessments for use in the Lebanese national education system. The efforts of this research-practice-policy partnership have led to the identification

of a priority set of social and emotional skills for Lebanese and Syrian refugee children in formal schools; provided a concrete roadmap for future measure development and testing in Lebanon; and serve as a proof of concept, of interest globally, on how to align understanding of and build consensus around SEL in national middle-income country education systems responsible for providing education to vulnerable and refugee children.

Mind the gap: Identifying and responding to needs, in context

We established the above-referenced research-practice-policy partnership as an extension of work done under the Education in Emergencies: Evidence for Action Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey (3EA | MENAT) Measurement and Metrics Consortium. Between 2017 and 2019, the Consortium sought to increase the number of publicly available measures of children's holistic learning and development that had been developed, adapted and tested in the MENAT context (Tubbs Dolan & Caires, 2020). When World Learning, CERD, and DGE-DOPS initially embarked in the Consortium on the process of developing a measure of children's social and emotional skills, they identified a series of roadblocks; most critically, they lacked an evidence-informed framework to guide them as to which SEL skills were most important for children in Lebanon. In response to this gap, World Learning and NYU-TIES organized an Evidence Exchange workshop in which PSS and SEL experts from CERD and DGE-DOPS were invited to share current SEL frameworks, evidence gaps, and an overview of the SEL landscape in Lebanon, and researchers from NYU-TIES shared current international research on SEL and methods for developing meaningful frameworks.

At the close of the Evidence Exchange workshop, participants expressed that teachers, trainers, counsellors, and school staff often feel overwhelmed by the competing external demands placed on them since the start of the Syrian refugee crisis. They also

feel disappointment and disillusionment in the limited extent to which such demands have fulfilled their promises of improving the Lebanese education system and holistic learning outcomes. Given these concerns, both CERD and DGE-DOPS representatives strongly felt that they could not ask teachers or students to use an 'interim' measurement tool: one that was aligned with an existing Western SEL framework but that may not provide meaningful information given the lack of contextualization for Lebanon. Taking these concerns into consideration, the partnership chose to undertake a longer-term collaborative and iterative process driven by contextual and cultural factors and informed by scientific principles to design and test a measure of children's social and emotional skills that is truly fit for purpose.

At the core, the revised process for measure development rests on the development of an empirically-based and contextually appropriate national framework for SEL. To develop such a framework, we collectively identified the following steps: (1) map existing frameworks using a rigorous methodology to understand the nature and range of SEL skills currently taught in Lebanon; (2) identify from the perspective of CERD and DGE-DOPS staff an initial set of priority SEL skills and competencies for children in grades 1–6 in Lebanon and organize them into a draft framework; (3) validate and operationalize the skills within the framework; (4) collect, analyze, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data on the skills; and (5) revise the draft framework. In the remainder of this chapter, we share our experiences and learnings to date from steps 1–3.

Starting at square two: Framework mapping

Recognizing that colleagues from World Learning, CERD, and DGE-DOPS had been engaged in many efforts related to SEL prior to their joining the 3EA | MENAT Consortium, the partnership agreed to build on existing efforts rather than going back to 'square one.' To that end, as a first step, World Learning and NYU-TIES asked CERD and DGE-DOPS to identify a set of frameworks, both local and imported, that were actively being used to inform SEL policy and programming in Lebanon. Partners from DGE-DOPS and CERD identified a set of eight frameworks, focusing on frameworks that were used by Government of Lebanon departments (e.g., research, curriculum, teacher training) to guide their work.

But one key roadblock to meaningful collaboration on SEL across key stakeholders within Lebanon is the lack of common language to describe and discuss SEL competencies. Thus NYU-TIES sought the engagement of the Harvard EASEL Lab (EASEL) to train and support staff within CERD and DGE-DOPS to apply the methodology developed as part of the EASEL Taxonomy Project to code these existing frameworks (Jones et al., 2019). The EASEL Lab's Taxonomy Project seeks to create greater precision and transparency in the field of SEL and to facilitate more effective translation between research and practice. The project has developed a rigorous coding system – based on an extensive literature review as well as extended iteration over six years – to identify whether and how specific SEL skills and other 'non-academic' constructs are related to one another (Jones et al., 2016). When these codes are applied to frameworks, the resulting database provides the basis for a website and suite of interactive tools that enable mapping and analysis of skills across different frameworks. This allows the user to understand, for example, when the same underlying skill is referred to by different names in different frameworks – or when different skills are referred to by the same name in different frameworks – creating a common vocabulary and language to reach true consensus.

Following a careful review by the Harvard EASEL Lab, it was determined that five of the eight original Lebanese SEL frameworks met the minimum criteria to be coded using their methodology (three international: CASEL, P21, Development of a Learner; and two locally developed: Life Skills for Professional Orientation (LSPO), and Learner's Profile). The Harvard EASEL Lab then trained the core project team – representing NYU-TIES, CERD, DGE-DOPS,

and World Learning – on the EASEL coding system during a five-day in-person workshop. At the outset of the workshop, and before the introduction of the coding system, Lebanese participants were asked to identify priority skills and competencies necessary for children to succeed in school and life in the Lebanese context. This was done in order to capture important skills that may not have been included in the EASEL taxonomy, and it was an important step to promote the identification of contextually appropriate skills that we revisit later. Given that at the time of the workshop all of the EASEL materials were only available in English, we asked that participants have a working knowledge of English and allowed time for translation and discussion for staff with less English fluency (we have since commissioned a French and Lebanese-Arabic translation of the codebook; the Arabic version has been validated and is available for future projects).

Coding involves a process of identifying text within the frameworks that corresponds to a definition/description in the Taxonomy codebook and tagging the text with a corresponding ID. The workshop included time to practice coding and to discuss adaptations to the coding system, in order to capture salient skills and features of SEL in the Lebanese educational and cultural context. Coding was conducted in pairs and all coded data were entered into a database which was used to generate a distance matrix that describes the relatedness of all skills in the database (regardless of skill name or originating framework). Following the workshop, a series of calls were held to validate and finalize the framework coding, after which the EASEL lab conducted a series of analyses and developed a private website for partners in Lebanon with visual tools comparing the original five frameworks from Lebanon in addition to seven additional international frameworks of relevance to the Lebanese context (e.g. IB Learner Profile, OECD Framework).

Building (evidence-informed) consensus: Prioritizing social and emotional skills

Four months after the first workshop, we reconvened for a second two-day analysis workshop to better understand the specific social and emotional skills and competencies emphasized (and de-emphasized!) within and across SEL frameworks currently in use in Lebanon; and based on that information, to identify a preliminary set of priority SEL competencies to form the basis for a national SEL framework. On the first day of the analysis workshop, participants from CERD and DOPS interacted with the visual tools and thesaurus on the dedicated Lebanon SEL website. Through structured conversations, these tools promoted a deeper and evidence-based understanding of the composition, similarities, and differences of the included frameworks. Building from this foundation, participants were asked to determine which skills and competencies should be included in the first draft of the framework.

To guide this decision-making process, participants were asked to consider four criteria for selecting 'priority' social and emotional skills: Is the skill measurable, malleable, relevant for children in grades 1–6 in Lebanon, and is there evidence that supports the importance of this skill for holistic child development? In applying the criteria to the skills and competencies included in existing SEL frameworks, participants identified a preliminary set of 19 skills to consider for further prioritization. On the second day of the analysis workshop, participants used the qualitative data collected in the first workshop on priority skills for children in Lebanon to identify additional context-relevant skills that were not included in the initial list of 19 skills. This resulted in a list of 25 skills from which the group would identify priority skills for inclusion in the framework.

Participants then used a Q-sort methodology[2] in order to prioritize these skills (Brown, 1996). The Q-sort was designed to proceed via two phases: an initial sorting to narrow the field of skills through broad-strokes decision-making based on the above-outlined criteria; and a second sorting to provide more nuanced and precise determinations about a smaller set of skills. A set of notecards with all 25 skills was prepared and distributed to each participant in the workshop. In the first round, participants independently sorted cards into one of three piles: 'definitely no', 'maybe', and 'definitely yes'. In the second round, participants independently sorted the 'maybe' pile into three new piles again: 'leaning yes', 'somewhere in the middle', and 'leaning no'. The facilitators then entered data on which cards were sorted into which of the five categories into an Excel sheet and ran simple, descriptive analyses (during a break). The distribution of the sorted cards, as well as the 'think aloud' narrative or discussion following the sorting exercise, were used to capture how participants think about a particular idea or topic.

We identified priority skills as those that ranked the highest on two different indices created from the Q-sort data: the highest average rating (average Q-sort result on a scale of 1 to 5) and the most consensus (lowest standard deviation). The Q-sort resulted in the following prioritized list of skills:

- Spiritual and ethical values*
- Working memory and planning skills
- Inhibitory control
- Intellectual values
- Adaptability/Flexibility*

The skills with an asterisk (*) are ones that were not included in any of the five coded SEL frameworks, but that were added to the set of 25 skills included in the Q-sort activity based on discussions with participants in both the first and second workshops about essential skills for children in Lebanon.

After reviewing the results, the participants were given an opportunity to re-incorporate skills that had not been identified as highest priorities through the Q-sort. This process included further conversations surrounding interpretation and understanding of those skills. After a voting process and discussion, the group decided to also add in the following skills that had less agreement (higher standard deviations and lower means) in the original Q-sort:

- Prosocial and cooperative behavior
- Respect for environment*
- Performance values
- Self-knowledge

Once the participants had agreed on a list of priority skills, a (spirited!) discussion followed on how to move and organize the priority skills into a draft framework. A breakthrough occurred when a participant suggested a matrix in which the priorities could be placed. Drawing on ecological models of child development, one axis consists of Self, Other, and Environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Drawing on developmental theories of learning and skill acquisition, the other axis consists of Knowledge, Approach (attitudes), and Management (behavior) (Iverson & Portnoy, 1977). The resulting matrix then created flexibility for the placement of the prioritized skills within it. Keeping in mind the criteria outlined above, we discussed the parameters of each cell in the matrix and jointly decided on which skills or competencies belonged in which cell (see Figure 1 for an initial draft of the matrix). However, it was clear that the 'granularity' of these prioritized skills and competencies varied widely (for example *values* felt much larger than *inhibitory control*), and it was agreed that further discussion was necessary to determine the appropriate placement of and relationship

2 Q-sort is a methodology used to uncover and identify the range of opinions on a specific topic and involves three stages: (1) developing a set of statements to be sorted, (2) sorting based on a continuum of preference, and (3) entering numeric codes corresponding to the continuum of preference into a spreadsheet and calculating summary statistic (Valenta & Wigger, 1997)

between the various skills and competencies. These foundational conversations informed how the framework was then revised and elaborated.

Elaborating the framework: Process and methods

Following the development of the framework matrix, the next step was to draft contextually appropriate and theoretically grounded definitions of the priority skills and/or competencies, and to format the skills and competencies into a structure that was conceptually sound and empirically testable. This phase was led by a working group with representatives from DGE-DOPS, CERD, World Learning and a professor from the Lebanese University with expertise in SEL, psychology, and education. To do so, the working group (a) conducted a thorough literature review to determine the theoretical background of the SEL framework and the relevant foundational theories in the fields of cognitive, developmental, and educational psychology; (b) defined the skills and/or competencies with reference to definitions included in globally recognized theories; and (c) elaborated the developmental trajectory of the skills and/or competencies within the structure of Bloom and Krathwohl's hierarchy of cognitive and affective domains (Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia, 1984).

Recommended SEL Competencies (Draft 1.0)

	Knowledge	Approach	Management
Self	Emotion knowledge	Intellectual values	Working memory Planning and organization
	Understanding strengths and weaknesses	Self-efficacy	Inhibitory control
	Personal values	Self-esteem	Cognitive flexibility
			Performance values
Others	Perspective-taking	Ethical and spiritual values	Flexibility
	Emotion knowledge	Pro-social attitude	Conflict resolution
	Understanding social and cultural values and cues	Empathy	Pro-social behavior
Environment	Understanding civic values	Ethical and spiritual values	Adaptability
		Respect for environment	Sustainability
		Civic values	

Figure 1: Matrix of prioritized skills and competencies

During the initial phase of the definitions process, regular reference was made back to the Harvard EASEL Lab Taxonomy. However, as the working group members reflected on how the culture and context of Lebanon informed the development of social and emotional competencies, it became evident that the definitions required additional developmental, cultural, and pragmatic contextualization beyond the contents of the Harvard Taxonomy codebook. Specifically, the framework definitions needed to identify a range of developmental skills with different levels of skill complexity in order to: (1) assess alignment with SEL-related objectives in the national curriculum; (2) identify gaps in the breadth and depth of the national curriculum; and (3) guide teaching and assessment efforts for different age/grade levels.

In order to elaborate these definitions – and ultimately develop an assessment to evaluate the social and emotional knowledge, abilities and skills of children in grades 1–6 in Lebanon – we employed several theoretical frameworks. First, we sought to classify the prioritized SEL skills and/or competencies according to the cognitive and affective domains of Bloom and Krathwohl's taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002; Krathwohl & Anderson, 2010). Within the affective and cognitive domains, research suggests that affect and cognition are intertwined, developing dynamically together throughout a child's learning process (Krathwohl, 2002). Kraiger and colleagues (1993) further point out that cognitive ability is foundational to affective learning, which is critical to behavioral performance and practical skills. But given that thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are closely related and work in a circular manner,

stage-specific social and emotional learning outcomes are often difficult to tease out and evaluate. To facilitate our ability to do so, the working group broke down the definitions of the priority skills and/or competencies into three domains: cognitive, emotional, and social. For each competency, general developmental objectives were described under each of the three domains, identifying the (hypothesized) most basic to the (hypothesized) most complex knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors within each (cognitive, emotional, and social) domain of each skill and/or competency.

In practice, what resulted from applying these theories is a set of definitions that take into consideration the more granular or basic skills that make up more complex SEL skills, and are hypothesized to emerge at different developmental stages in early and middle childhood. For example, within the definition for *flexibility* the granular skills being 'explains different components of an issue' (cognitive) and 'expresses/describes feelings' (emotional) and more complex being 'proposes new solutions' (cognitive) and 'analyzes reasons for positive and negative emotions' (emotional). This decomposition of complex skills is valuable for several purposes: to guide curriculum development while also facilitating alignment with national standards. From an assessment perspective, this format in essence provides a set of testable and revisable hypotheses as to what, and when, social and emotional knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors emerge throughout stages of early and middle childhood, enabling a more meaningful and precise understanding of how children in Lebanon develop these skills.

Next steps

The first draft of the Lebanese SEL Framework (not yet publicly available) was approved and adopted by the Lebanese Minister of Education in August 2021. However, we recognize that this process is iterative and needs to incorporate evidence *from* and the perspectives *of* multiple informants – including from the children, caregivers, and teachers and principals in Lebanon. To that end we are currently conducting qualitative interviews and working to develop a quantitative assessment which will be tested in early 2022. Findings from these nationally representative data collection efforts will be used to test our hypotheses of which SEL skills and competencies are most important for children in Lebanon, elaborate what these skills look like in practice, and revise the SEL Framework. We hope to share the findings from these efforts in a future publication.

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8

Integrating SEL into early childhood settings in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

In Brazil, recent national policies such as the *Base Nacional Curricular Comum* (BNCC) and *Marco Legal da Primeira Infância* include social and emotional skills as central 'learning rights' for young children. However, few evidence-based approaches for social emotional learning (SEL) are available in Brazil. In 2018, researchers from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of São Paulo Medical School began partnering with local educators and learning specialists to adapt and contextualize a set of SEL Kernels for early childhood education settings in Brazil, and align them with the BNCC national standards. SEL Kernels are short, targeted, low-cost strategies designed to improve a specific SEL skill, classroom practice, or outcome.

This brief describes the processes used for local input and adaptation of Kernels, focusing on the alignment with national standards and the partnership with early childhood educators in Brazil. We highlight findings from initial landscape research with educators and families, which identify local values, needs, challenges, and hopes and dreams for Brazil's youngest children. We describe the classroom materials that resulted from our partnership and summarize findings from an initial study, including reflections from local educators who participated in the partnership.

Intégration de l'apprentissage socio-émotionnel dans les structures de la petite enfance au Brésil

Au Brésil, les récentes politiques nationales telles que la Base Nacional Curricular Comum (BNCC) et le Marco Legal da Primeira Infância incluent les compétences sociales et émotionnelles comme des 'droits d'apprentissage' essentiels pour les jeunes enfants. Cependant, peu d'approches fondées sur des données probantes pour l'apprentissage socio-émotionnel (ASE) sont disponibles au Brésil. En 2018, des chercheurs de la Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) et de la faculté de médecine de l'Université de São Paulo (USP) ont commencé à établir un partenariat avec des éducateurs et des spécialistes de l'apprentissage locaux pour adapter et contextualiser un ensemble de ASE Kernels pour les établissements d'éducation de la petite enfance au Brésil, et les aligner sur les normes nationales du BNCC. Les ASE Kernels sont des stratégies courtes, ciblées et peu coûteuses conçues pour améliorer une compétence ASE spécifique, une pratique de classe ou un résultat.

Cet article décrit les processus utilisés pour la contribution et l'adaptation locales des Kernels, en mettant l'accent sur l'alignement avec les normes nationales et le partenariat avec les éducateurs de la petite enfance au Brésil. Nous soulignons les résultats de la recherche initiale sur le paysage avec les éducateurs et les familles, qui identifient les valeurs, les besoins, les défis, les espoirs et les rêves locaux pour les plus jeunes enfants du Brésil. Nous décrivons le matériel pédagogique issu de notre partenariat et résumons les résultats d'une étude initiale, y compris les réflexions des éducateurs locaux qui ont participé au partenariat.

La integración de las habilidades sociales y emocionales en los entornos de la primera infancia en Brasil

En Brasil, políticas nacionales recientes como la Base Nacional Curricular Común (BNCC) y el Marco Legal de Primera Infancia incluyen las habilidades sociales y emocionales como 'derechos de aprendizaje' centrales para niños y niñas pequeños. Sin embargo, hay pocos enfoques basados en evidencia para el aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) en Brasil. En 2018, investigadores de Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) y la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de São Paulo (USP) se asociaron con educadores locales y especialistas en aprendizaje para adaptar y contextualizar un conjunto de Kernels SEL para centros de educación infantil en Brasil, y alinearlos con estándares nacionales delineados en el BNCC. Los Kernels SEL son estrategias cortas, específicas y de bajo costo, diseñadas para trabajar una habilidad SEL específica, una práctica en el aula o resultados.

Este informe describe los procesos utilizados para los aportes de expertos locales y la adaptación de los Kernels, con especial foco en la alineación con estándares nacionales y la cooperación con educadores de primera infancia en Brasil. Destacamos los resultados de una investigación inicial llevada a cabo con educadores y familias en la cual se identifican valores locales, necesidades, desafíos, esperanzas y sueños de los niños y niñas más pequeños de Brasil. Asimismo, describimos los materiales educativos creados a partir de nuestra cooperación, resumimos los resultados del estudio inicial e incluimos las reflexiones de los y las educadores locales que participaron en la colaboración.

1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, Brazil has made significant strides in improving access to education services for young children. Enrollment rates in public early childhood centers doubled between 1999 and 2009, and continue to rise (Evans & Kosec, 2012). Several national policies have been developed to increase early childhood access and quality, including the *Marco Legal da Primeira Infância*, which prioritizes early childhood development policies and services nationally, and the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC), which defines learning standards for early childhood through upper secondary education. At the same time, the quality of early educational programs in Brazil remains low, particularly for children from low-income backgrounds (Campos, 2010). The education sector lacks a systematic approach to the development of social and emotional skills that are critical for children's learning and later life outcomes. By developing strategies to integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into early childhood settings in Brazil, our team of interdisciplinary researchers and developmental scientists in both the U.S. and Brazil aims to support Brazilian teachers to enhance the quality of instruction, in hopes of improving developmental outcomes for young children.

Although the BNCC includes social and emotional skills as central 'learning rights' for young children, few evidence-based approaches for SEL are available in Brazilian early educational settings. Prior research suggests that traditional, comprehensive SEL programs are hard to implement as intended because they are complex and time-intensive, and the cost of program materials tends to be high (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). This challenge is exacerbated in low-resource contexts where education funding is limited, teacher pre-service and in-service training is reduced, and the resources needed to train, implement and sustain new curricular programs are often not available. Furthermore, because the evidence base on SEL comes largely from high-income countries, new approaches are needed to meaningfully adapt and contextualize SEL to meet the goals of teachers, families, and communities around the world (Jukes, 2019).

In response to these challenges, our team of researchers at the Ecological Approaches to Social and Emotional Learning (EASEL) Laboratory at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

has been building an alternative approach to SEL for use in low-resource settings – which we refer to as *SEL Kernels* (Jones et al, 2017). Kernels are short, targeted activities or strategies used by evidence-based programs to promote growth or change in a particular skill or behavior (Embry & Biglan, 2008). Kernels have been shown to be effective for a range of learning and health outcomes (Embry, 2004) and provide a low-cost, flexible approach to SEL that enables teachers to select only the strategies or activities that best fit their needs and goals. By focusing on the 'active ingredients' associated with positive change, Kernels are designed to increase scalability, sustainability, and impact. Finally, because they are short, simple, and involve few materials, Kernels are easier to adapt for use across different settings, and can be infused with local games, songs, existing teaching practices, and other features of the local culture and learning environment. The EASEL Lab's Kernels database includes common strategies found across the leading evidence-based SEL programs from Pre-K through primary school in the U.S. However, we have also adapted and tested Kernels in a range of low- and middle-income countries including SEL Kernels in Northeast Nigeria (Bailey, Raisch, et al., 2021), and a Kernels prototype called Brain Games in Lebanon, Niger, and Sierra Leone (Bailey, 2017; Weiss-Yagoda, et al., 2021).

This paper describes the process and findings from a multi-year partnership between researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, researchers at the University of São Paulo Medical School, and Brazilian early learning specialists to adapt SEL Kernels for use in Brazilian early childhood settings. We describe how we identified the SEL skills most important to early learning teachers and parents in Brazil (section 2); results from a mapping exercise to align SEL Kernels to the BNCC national standards (section 3); the process for selecting and adapting evidence-based SEL strategies for the Brazilian early learning context (section 4); specific challenges and opportunities identified by teachers during and after field testing (sections 5 and 6); and conclude with a set of considerations and future directions, as municipal authorities consider how to scale Kernels to meet the needs of young children while schools begin to re-open following school closures and periods of hybrid learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (section 7).

2 Starting with local input

Kernels adaptation and field testing took place across 15 public early childhood centers in the Southeast Region of Brazil from 2018 to 2019. The centers spanned urban and rural areas of Paraty, a small seaside town in the state of Rio de Janeiro. As a first step in the adaptation process, with support from the Department of Education of the municipality, Brazilian early learning specialists conducted focus groups with early childhood educators and caregivers to identify local needs and values. The focus groups included 105 educators from 15 early childhood public centers and 212 parents of children enrolled at these centers. Focus groups explored (a) parent and educator views of the skills that children need to succeed, (b) classroom challenges, (c) the types of SEL strategies parents and educators would be most likely to use at home or in the classroom, and (d) parents' hopes and dreams for their children.

Through the initial focus groups with teachers, we learned that aggression, interpersonal violence, community violence, and environmental sustainability are key concerns for early childhood educators in the community. When discussing classroom challenges, teachers identified student engagement and inclusion as their overriding classroom challenge, with the greatest concern of teachers in classrooms for 2–3-year-olds being student participation and interaction in class, and the greatest challenge of teachers in the 3–4-year-old classrooms and 4–5-year-old classrooms being the inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs.

Through the focus groups with parents, we learned that caregivers dream of seeing their children cultivate skills and characteristics like

empathy, respect, gratitude, character, happiness, and persistence. The focus groups provided parents an opportunity to talk about their in-home interactions with their children and some parents shared about the difficulties they had setting rules. Families also raised concerns about the state of the world, and fears about how to best protect their children from crime and violence in their communities. Beyond worries about the present, many parents voiced concerns about the future and the world their children would be living in as adults. When asked what they dreamt for their children, parents commonly responded with hopes that their children would go into respected helping professions, including becoming doctors, firemen, and teachers. Relatedly, parents shared hopes about their children becoming people of good character, including people who make good choices, have a sense of direction and purpose in life, help and contribute to their community, and are respectful, humble, confident, and creative individuals. These desires aligned with a broader conversation about the importance of developing social and emotional skills. When asked about the social and emotional skill areas they consider important to focus on, caregivers identified emotional knowledge, problem solving, grit, and resilience.

These initial focus groups with educators and families provided insights into what educators and parents value, what they see as strengths and areas for growth for their children, and how they are already building social and emotional learning in their homes and classrooms. These preliminary data served as a starting point through which to begin to select preliminary strategies to meet the needs and build on the strengths, values, and practices expressed by teachers and parents.

3 Alignment with Brazilian national standards

Next, we reviewed the BNCC and conducted a mapping exercise to align with the SEL Kernels. The BNCC covers national education standards from early childhood through upper secondary education and includes Fields of Experience, Learning Rights, Learning and Development Goals and specific objectives that children in Brazil are expected to achieve. In 2018, early childhood educators recognized the importance of these standards, but without a formal curriculum, often had trouble translating them into effective instruction in the classroom. By mapping the skills targeted by the SEL Kernels onto the BNCC framework, our team was able to identify points of alignment between specific Kernels activities and the BNCC's national learning standards, and make clear to educators how using the Kernels can directly support their goals for students' learning and development.

Through the mapping exercise, we found that all five BNCC Learning Rights (Get Along, Participate, Explore, Express, Get to Know Oneself) are aligned with specific skills targeted by the SEL Kernels. Similarly, all BNCC Fields of Experience had some alignment with the Kernels; however, it was the *Myself, The Other, Ourselve*s field of experience that most strongly aligned with the Kernels, linking with all five social and emotional domains. Figure 1 shows the alignment between the skills targeted by the SEL Kernels and the BNCC Fields of Experience.

4 Drawing from evidence-based strategies

Using our findings from focus groups and the mapping exercise, we began a process of selecting and adapting strategies to be included in the Kernels for early childhood in Brazil. We used a database of strategies that the EASEL Lab has built over the past seven years by coding evidence-based SEL programs, primarily from the U.S., for the specific skills targeted and instructional strategies used. This database includes lessons, activities, routines, and teaching strategies that span different purposes, age groups, and learning environments. With support from a Brazilian early childhood educator, preliminary strategies were selected using four overarching criteria: (1) relevance to local goals and needs as identified through focus groups, (2)

alignment to specific Learning Rights or Fields of Experience in the BNCC, (3) developmental appropriateness for children between three to five years of age, and (4) cultural and contextual appropriateness for Brazilian early childhood settings. While selecting preliminary strategies, contextual considerations were noted. This included flagging terms and concepts that could be replaced or adapted while still keeping the core elements of the strategies intact. For example, the construct 'emotion regulation' was flagged as inappropriate for the context due to negative connotations of 'regulation' and cultural emphasis on the expression rather than control of emotions. The resulting preliminary strategies were drafted into a simple one-pager format and shared with Brazilian teachers during the field-testing phase.

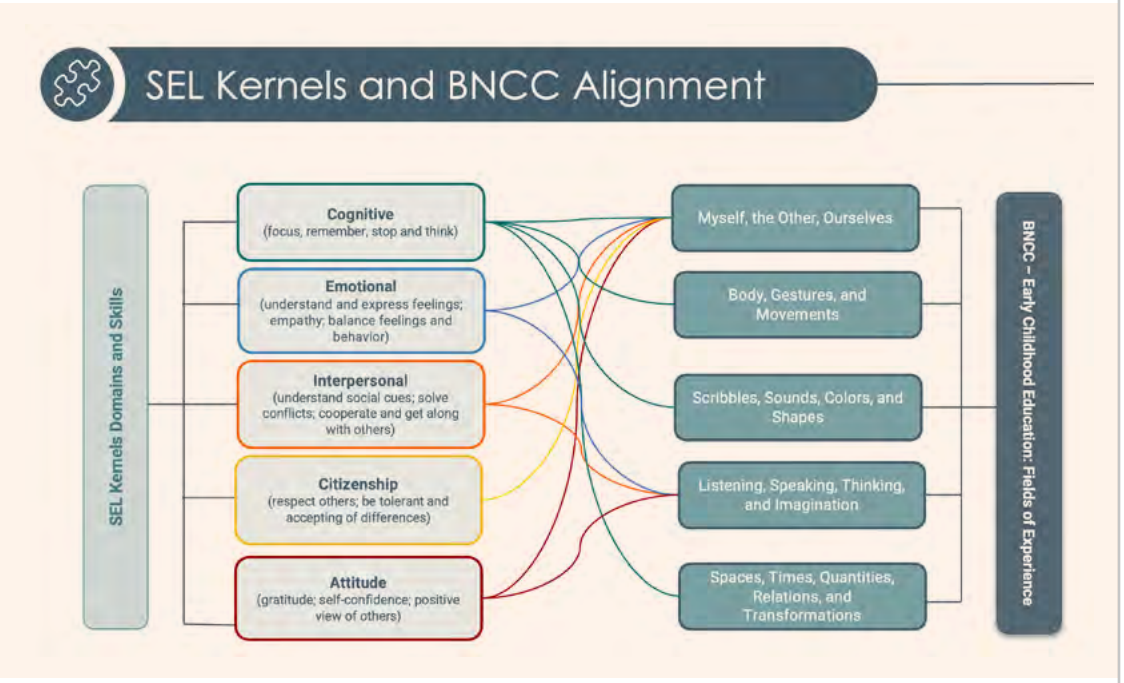


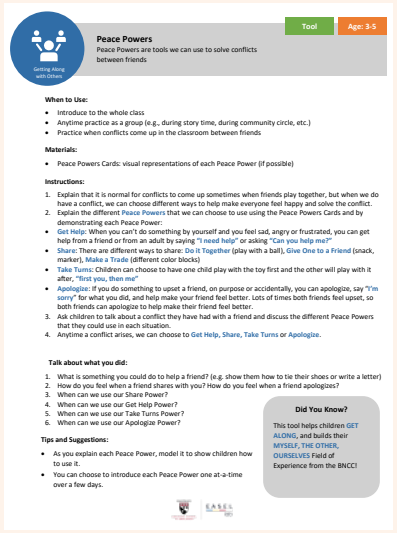
Figure 1: Alignment between skills targeted by the SEL Kernels (left column) and the BNCC Fields of Experience (right column)

5 Field-testing with early educators

To begin the field-testing phase, our Brazil and U.S.-based teams came together for training on the Kernels approach and the specific Kernels that would be field-tested during the following five months. Through initial teacher training on SEL and monthly follow-up visits, our Brazilian team introduced the same teachers from the focus groups to the Kernels, observed their practice, and supported their growth. During monthly visits to Paraty, classroom observations were conducted using a field-testing protocol designed to record (a) what went well, (b) what did not go well, and (c) any adaptations used or suggested by teachers, in addition to information about class size, time of day, materials available, and other features of the learning environment. In addition, our Brazil and U.S.-based teams had monthly debriefing sessions to discuss challenges and opportunities that were arising, and the ways the Kernels were being adapted to better meet teachers' and students' needs. Iterations were made throughout the field-testing period and versions of the revised and new Kernels were shared back with teachers periodically for continued testing.

A few additional data sources informed the Kernels revisions during field-testing, including use of the WhatsApp platform to support and nudge teachers to implement the Kernels. Since the WhatsApp platform was already being used by early educators to connect and support one another, our team encouraged participating teachers to use existing WhatsApp groups and join new Kernels-specific groups to share challenges, encouragement, and successful adaptations to the Kernels activities via text messages, photos, and videos.

Based on teacher feedback received during field-testing, several modifications were made to the Kernels materials including simplified language, added visuals, and reduced text. In addition to this, new Kernels were created to address teachers' specific concerns about aggressive behavior, inclusivity of children with disabilities, and literacy and numeracy instruction,



August 2018 November 2019 May 2020

Figure 2: SEL Kernels materials developed for Brazil early childhood settings beginning with preliminary selections (August 2018), revisions from Field Testing (November 2019) and final materials with local design input (May 2020)

**The card pictured here from May of 2020 is an example template showing the layout of the most recent Kernels card; it does not correspond to this specific Kernel.*

which are not directly targeted in the original Kernels. Figure 2 demonstrates the evolution of the Kernels materials from one-page documents at the beginning of the project to a deck of strategy cards that continues to evolve.

After many iterations, the latest set of Brazil Kernels includes 21 total Kernels. Each Kernel in the final set includes the use of a toy and all teachers were provided with a toy kit that corresponded to the Kernels activities. Because resources in some settings were more limited, and the teachers mentioned they wanted additional materials that would help them do the activities, the team opted to use recycled material toys that could be easily replaced with common household or classroom objects. For example, a 'honey pot' made from a plastic bottle is used for one of the activities. Beyond the strategy cards, the card deck includes tips for best practice, inclusive practice, working with trauma-affected children, and giving positive praise. Each activity card also includes a banner linking the Kernel to the Field of Experience and the Learning and Development Goals that it targets from the BNCC.

6 Teacher perspectives from the field

To better understand teacher experiences and perceptions using and adapting the Kernels activities, our team conducted a series of interviews after field-testing ended. Six teachers and three coordinators participated across a total of five interview sessions, with each interview including one to two participants.

All participating teachers and staff were from urban and rural schools and had been using the Kernels throughout the field-testing phase. Our team used a semi-structured approach, relying on a protocol that included open-ended questions that were pursued flexibly throughout the interviews. The protocol covered topics including: past experience with SEL; experience using the Kernels, including perceived impact on teacher practice and relationships in the classroom; perception of the Kernels and suggestions for improvements; and ideas for strengthening experience of the Kernels beyond the classroom. Interviews were transcribed, translated, and analyzed using a ground-up emic coding process in which the following recurring and salient themes were identified.

WhatsApp group sparked creativity and buy-in: Use of the WhatsApp platform proved to be essential not only for capturing feedback from teachers, but also for supporting teacher buy-in and enthusiasm about the Kernels. As a way to nudge implementation, our team began a WhatsApp group that became a tremendous source of support, providing both our research team and the teachers with an opportunity to share tips and adaptations, as well as a place to celebrate each other's work. Coaching visits between the research team and teachers occurred once a month, but the WhatsApp group provided continuous, daily support. All but one teacher interviewed participated in the WhatsApp group chats and all participating teachers interviewed mentioned the group chat's contribution to the exchange and generation of new ideas related to the Kernels activities. One teacher shared, "The WhatsApp group was excellent and very resourceful... Listening to the teachers talking about some activity you had not done yet would make you curious to try it out and see if it would have the same format." Teachers were particularly inspired by seeing other teachers adapt the activities. This was relevant because some teachers expressed hesitancy about trying out activities which were unfamiliar to them. One teacher recalled, 'There were times when I had difficulty understanding how to execute the activities... Over time, I would closely study the activities at home...the teachers [on WhatsApp] helped me move forward,' adding that her use of the app gave her a 'sense of security, reinforcement and a stimulus to continue practicing and learning activities' that she had not tried yet.

Use of Kernels was varied based on student needs and routine: Teachers appreciated having the freedom to adapt and use the Kernels as they saw fit. While some teachers had a routine and used specific activities on a daily basis, others' use of the Kernels was more variable. For example, one teacher who incorporated one of the Kernels into her daily routine said, 'The one I always did with them during circle time was the breathing activity, to calm them down; this one was practically daily, regardless if we did other activities.' Another teacher shared that she did not follow a set routine with any specific Kernels, and used them as she felt was appropriate throughout the day, stating, 'It depends on the day. If the class is very agitated, first thing at the start of class I will practice one of the activities.' We see that in both these examples, the use of the Kernels is still dependent on the needs of the students, but teachers have choice in how to implement them throughout the day and week. Overall, it appears that allowing the teachers the freedom to make decisions about how and when to use the activities signified, at least to some teachers, a level of respect for teacher knowledge and deference to their unique understanding of their students and classroom.

Easy adaptation to the outdoors: The Kernels proved to be easily transferrable from indoor to outdoor spaces. Due to space constraints and a general appreciation for the benefits of being in nature, most of the teachers interviewed expressed a preference for practicing the activities outdoors and the Kernels worked well to accommodate this preference. One teacher discussed some of the reasons she opted for using the Kernels only outdoors, 'I have never used my physical classroom...[it] was terribly small – it accommodated only 12 or 13 students, but I had a total of 24. This meant we did not fit. Another reason why I chose to begin working outside of the classroom was to give the children more space. I spent the whole school year working in the sand, near

the trees, near the leaves, whilst practicing the dances, songs, and games.' Teachers also outlined additional benefits to practicing the activities in nature, with one noting, 'Overall, it appeared that the children felt more comfortable being outdoors, and this was shown in their way of perceiving, focusing attention, and remembering.' While practicing the activities outdoors may not be possible or safe for teachers in other settings, especially for teachers in more urban environments, the ease of moving the activities outdoors shows promise in terms of adaptability.

Low-burden, flexible approach to monitoring led to freedom and ownership: Unlike many studies, teachers were not asked to fill out a standardized monitoring form for this project and this freedom led to creative methods for monitoring implementation across different classrooms (for more detail on monitoring and evaluation see Colagrossi et al., in press, discussed under Considerations and Next Steps). One teacher shared, 'The proposal for this project felt very light and gentle. At the same time, there was no obligation to rigorously follow a set of instructions, which was what made me feel more comfortable. I was able to create and to work on what was proposed…freely.' For many teachers, it was natural to follow their students' progress throughout the year and having the freedom to track this in different ways allowed them and their students to feel like they were part of the process and made the data useful to them, from motivating their classrooms to do more Kernels to recognizing their progress over time. One school had a classroom evaluation board that helped track each classroom's growth throughout the school year. Many of the schools used their BNCC-required weekly journals to track overall progress with the activities. One teacher noted that this practice was especially helpful to her as it helped her remember which Kernels she had completed with her class, stating that 'when you engage with the weekly journal, it makes it easier to remember the practices.' Other teachers included their students in the data tracking. One classroom created a poster and made a knot each time they completed an activity, while other classrooms added stars to posters they had created. It is likely that continuous monitoring and reporting would have been overwhelming for teachers and may have lessened teacher willingness to implement, adapt, and track progress of the activities creatively.

Kernels home connection: Children were eager to engage with the Kernels activities at home. One teacher shared, 'Once, a mother asked me, "Teach me how to blow a candle because I do not understand what my son is trying to say." She said her child wanted to practice this activity before going to sleep, but the mother did not understand the meaning. I told her that I teach the children to breathe deep as if smelling the flower and then imagine blowing out a candle. After this encounter, I realized how seriously the children took on what was being taught at school.' Without being prompted or directed, many children tried to apply what they had learned at school while at home, leading some parents to inquire about how to practice the activities with their children.

7 Considerations and next steps

Our findings from the field-testing suggest that local involvement and robust contextualization is key to making SEL materials relevant, feasible, and targeted to the specific local needs as well as the cultural norms and practices of a particular context. To this end, we raise the following considerations as important for thoughtful adaptation of SEL in diverse settings:

Teacher ownership and contextualization: Teachers need to feel ownership of the materials they are using, whether through direct co-creation, through choice, or through ease of adaptation. Although co-creation is not always possible, encouraging teachers to use stories, songs, and language that is contextually relevant to their students can make a difference, as can allowing teachers to pick from a menu of activities that make the most sense for their context.

Flexible and adaptable strategies: Activities must be easily adaptable to the needs of the teacher and students. Having

materials that can be incorporated into an existing daily routine (such as a morning meeting) and that can be used at different times of the day (e.g., during transitions or after lunch) is important. It can also be particularly helpful when a strategy can be used in different settings (e.g., urban, rural, outdoor, indoor).

Creative and less burdensome monitoring methods: Teachers need to see value in the data monitoring process. Self-monitoring can encourage teachers to get creative and engage their students in tracking progress. When teachers are able to make decisions on how to track what they are doing, they (and their students) take ownership of the process and monitoring becomes an activity that has value for the teacher and classroom. The creative monitoring methods teachers used in this project served as tools for motivation, friendly competition, and recognition of efforts across classrooms.

Peer to peer support: Teachers need systems and structures in place to support one another, whether through formal teacher learning communities or informal channels like a WhatsApp group. Providing teachers with a space through which they can offer advice and encouragement or ask for support can lead to teachers being more open to trying different activities and more comfortable and confident in their practices.

Next steps for SEL Kernels in Brazil include working with the Department of Education in Rio de Janeiro to adapt and expand the Kernels for hybrid learning and increase emphasis on skills that are sorely needed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, such as coping skills and stress reduction. A large-scale implementation study of Kernels for hybrid learning, in schools and in homes across the municipality of Rio, is currently underway. Through this study, we will learn how Kernels are perceived and used by teachers who were not part of the co-design process described above. The Rio study will also be an opportunity to explore teachers' perceptions of how the Kernels have shaped their own teaching practices and wellbeing as well as their students' behavior and skill development. This study will also allow us to test various delivery methods on a larger scale, including a two-day teacher training, more localized WhatsApp groups for each school, as well as Kernels delivered via TV segments to children and families in homes, and to educators turning to their peers for inspiration.

Ultimately, more experimental research should be conducted to fully understand the outcomes and impact of Kernels in Brazil, both on teachers and on children. However, as part of the implementation process in Paraty, a study was conducted on the adaptation and feasibility of the Kernels. The results of this study on social and emotional competence in a sample of children living in vulnerable situations are promising (Colagrossi et al., in press), with much larger effect sizes than in most education studies from low- to middle-income countries (Walker et al., 2007). The findings of this study are particularly promising given the teacher concerns that the Kernels aim to address, with significant gains in children's prosocial behavior and reductions in conduct and peer problems (Colagrossi et al., in press).

Finally, the EASEL Lab is adapting and contextualizing Kernels across more contexts and age groups in a variety of countries and settings. The findings from field-testing in Brazil are central as we further refine our processes for partnering with local stakeholders in each context to co-create Kernels that most closely reflect the local culture, values, strengths and needs.

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9

Building social and emotional skills of children in Delhi: Insights from the Happiness Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

In 2018, the Happiness Curriculum was launched as a daily 45-minute class, six days a week, for over 800,000 students from nursery to grade 8 in 1,024 government schools in New Delhi, India. This paper discusses the Happiness Curriculum as an innovative large-scale intervention aimed at building social and emotional skills of children and reimagining the purpose of education. It provides an overview of the Happiness Curriculum and the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers to implement this notable intervention. The components of the curriculum – mindfulness, stories and activities, and expression – are described with examples to demonstrate the process of teaching and learning social and emotional skills focused on promoting holistic development of students. We argue that the Happiness Curriculum enables students to become aware of different aspects of oneself, develop the ability to understand and respond to expectations in relationships empathetically, and inculcate human values to make meaningful contributions to society. We reflect on how the curriculum has been contextualized and culturally adapted to understand and respond to the needs of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and refer to parallel education reforms that support its effective implementation in this context. Finally, we emphasize the need to adopt an intersectional and equity lens to social and emotional learning that can nurture and enhance children's happiness and well-being.

Développer les compétences sociales et émotionnelles des enfants de Delhi : aperçu du Happiness Curriculum

En 2018, le Happiness Curriculum a été lancé sous la forme d'un cours quotidien de 45 minutes, six jours par semaine, pour plus de 800 000 élèves de la maternelle à la huitième année dans 1 024 écoles publiques de New Delhi, en Inde. Cet article traite du Happiness Curriculum en tant qu'intervention innovante à grande échelle visant à développer les compétences sociales et émotionnelles des enfants, et à réimaginer l'objectif de l'éducation. Il donne un aperçu du Happiness Curriculum et des pratiques pédagogiques adoptées par les enseignants pour mettre en œuvre cette intervention remarquable. Les composantes du curriculum – pleine conscience, histoires et activités, et expression – sont décrites à l'aide d'exemples pour démontrer le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage des compétences sociales et émotionnelles axées sur la promotion du développement holistique des élèves. Nous soutenons que le Happiness Curriculum permet aux élèves de prendre conscience des différents aspects de leur personnalité, de développer leur capacité à comprendre et à répondre aux attentes dans les relations avec empathie, et d'inculquer des valeurs humaines pour apporter

des contributions significatives à la société. Nous réfléchissons à la manière dont le curriculum a été contextualisé et culturellement adapté pour comprendre et répondre aux besoins des enfants issus des milieux défavorisés et en nous référant aux réformes éducatives parallèles qui soutiennent sa mise en œuvre efficace dans ce contexte. Enfin, nous soulignons la nécessité d'adopter une optique intersectionnelle et équitable pour l'apprentissage social et émotionnel qui peut nourrir et améliorer le bonheur et le bien-être des enfants.

El desarrollo de habilidades socioemocionales de niños y niñas en Delhi: reflexiones del Currículo de la Felicidad

En 2018, se puso en marcha el Currículo de la Felicidad (Happiness Curriculum) a través de una clase diaria de 45 minutos, seis días a la semana para más de 800.000 estudiantes desde el jardín de infancia hasta el 8º grado en 1.024 escuelas públicas en Nueva Delhi, India. En este artículo, se presenta el Currículo la Felicidad, una intervención a gran escala innovadora que tiene como objetivo desarrollar las habilidades socioemocionales (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) de niños y niñas, y que invita a reimaginar el propósito de la educación. Este trabajo proporciona una visión general del Currículo de la Felicidad y de las prácticas pedagógicas adoptadas por docentes para llevar a cabo esta notable intervención. Se describen los componentes del plan de estudios – mindfulness, cuentos, actividades y expresividad – con ejemplos para mostrar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de habilidades socioemocionales, centrado en fomentar un desarrollo de índole holístico en el alumnado. Argumentamos que el Currículo de la Felicidad permite a los y las estudiantes a tomar conciencia de diferentes aspectos de sus vidas personales, a desarrollar la capacidad de comprender y responder a sus expectativas en cuanto a sus relaciones con empatía, e a inculcar valores humanos que contribuyen de manera significativa a la sociedad. Luego,

reflexionamos sobre cómo el currículo se ha contextualizado y adaptado culturalmente para adaptarse y dar respuestas a las necesidades de niños y niñas de entornos desfavorecidos, y nos referimos a las reformas educativas que en paralelo apoyan su implementación efectiva en esos contextos. Por último, hacemos hincapié en la necesidad de adoptar una visión interseccional y de equidad para un aprendizaje socioemocional que pueda nutrir y mejorar la felicidad y el bienestar de niños y niñas.

Introduction

India has the world's second largest education system, which still operates according to the traditional colonial model of schooling characterized by teaching a structured, content-based curriculum, rote learning to develop reading, writing and arithmetic skills, and rigid examination systems (Gupta, 2007). The majority of children who go to government schools in India are first-generation learners and come from families who have had little or no previous access to formal education. Their lives are characterized by adverse circumstances ranging from financial constraints, deeply entrenched caste-based and gender inequalities, and poor health and well-being. Parents of these children can offer little support when it comes to their educational needs as they are occupied with meeting the financial needs of the household. At times, children are forced to start working early in their lives to provide financial support for their families. This social background is relevant to the education of children from low-income families (Dreze & Sen, 2002). The system fails to acknowledge these challenges and the statistics are testimony to that.

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2019 conducted by NGO Pratham, 40% of children enrolled in grade 1 in government schools could not recognize letters and only 41% could recognize two-digit numbers. The learning outcomes of government school children have consistently been abysmal. In 2018, the ASER data reported that only 73% of grade 8 students in

rural districts could read a grade 2 level text and 56% could not solve a basic division problem. In addition to the very low learning levels, ASER's first large-scale survey on the social and emotional abilities of children in rural India, conducted in 2019, revealed that children aged 4–8 possess limited skills in social and emotional learning (SEL). For instance, when 8-year-old children were asked what they would do if their friend snatched their only toy while playing, 22.7% said that they would beat or fight the friend, 16.9% children said they would get angry, 21.9% said that they would cry or feel sad. This indicates that children have limited skills to manage their own emotions and conflicts with peers. In the World Happiness Report 2020, India ranked 144 out of 156 countries and New Delhi ranked 180 in the subjective well-being ranking of cities (Helliwell et al., 2020). India's 2015–16 National Mental Health Survey stated that every sixth person in the country needs help with mental health (Gururaj et al., 2016). Stress, anxiety, and depression are common among adolescents. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 10,159 students died by suicide in 2018 and the 2014–18 period has seen a 26% jump from the preceding five-year period (Garai, 2020). These statistics are alarming, to say the least.

Research demonstrates that extreme poverty and failure to thrive are intrinsically linked and further give rise to emotion regulation difficulties such as being highly sensitive/insensitive to stress, lacking the ability to self-soothe and calm, and experiencing high anxiety levels among individuals (Pearson et al., 2020). The political and educational leaders in New Delhi recognized these contextual challenges and the needs of children. Therefore, efforts to focus on the happiness and well-being of children gained momentum. In 2018, the Happiness Curriculum was launched in 1,024 government schools in New Delhi for over 800,000 students from nursery to grade 8 (age group: 3–14-year-olds) as a 45-minute daily class, six days a week. The curriculum was developed by the government of Delhi in partnership with teachers and five NGOs: Dream a Dream, Labhya Foundation, Blue Orb, Abhivavak Vidhyalay, and Circle of Life, with expertise in life skills, human values, child psychology,

mindfulness and socio-emotional learning (SCERT-Delhi & DoE, 2019), with a focus on enabling children to become happy.

What is the Happiness Curriculum?

While the social and emotional learning movement has been in the spotlight in recent times in Western education systems, the concept of holistic education itself is not new in the Eastern parts of the world. Chiu & Huaman (2020) note that 'SEL is not a modern, Western phenomenon'. Holistic learning was common in India a century before the Greek period of enlightenment. Rooted in logic and pluralism, the Nalanda tradition in India incorporated knowledge of the mind and emotions, which are beneficial for humanity at large. In Indian thought and philosophy, the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom and truth were considered as the highest human goal. In the National Education Policy (2020), it is stated that 'the aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self' (NEP, 2020, p. 4). Given the demand to implement SEL programs in schools across varied contexts, several scholars have raised concerns that SEL practices have been majorly developed in the West and might not adequately address the needs of culturally different societies (CASEL, 2013). Osher and others (2016) argue that SEL practices 'must address cultural differences and adapt approaches to unique environments, beliefs, and behavioral norms' (p. 657). An SEL framework is considered to be culturally sensitive when it is 'sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL processes, includes culturally related competencies that matter for success, and does not favour any one cultural group over others' (Duraiappah et al., 2020, p. xxxv).

Delhi's Happiness Curriculum is an amalgamation of a localized and contextualized understanding of happiness and its significance in the Indian context, with SEL competencies as outlined in Western frameworks. The framework is based on

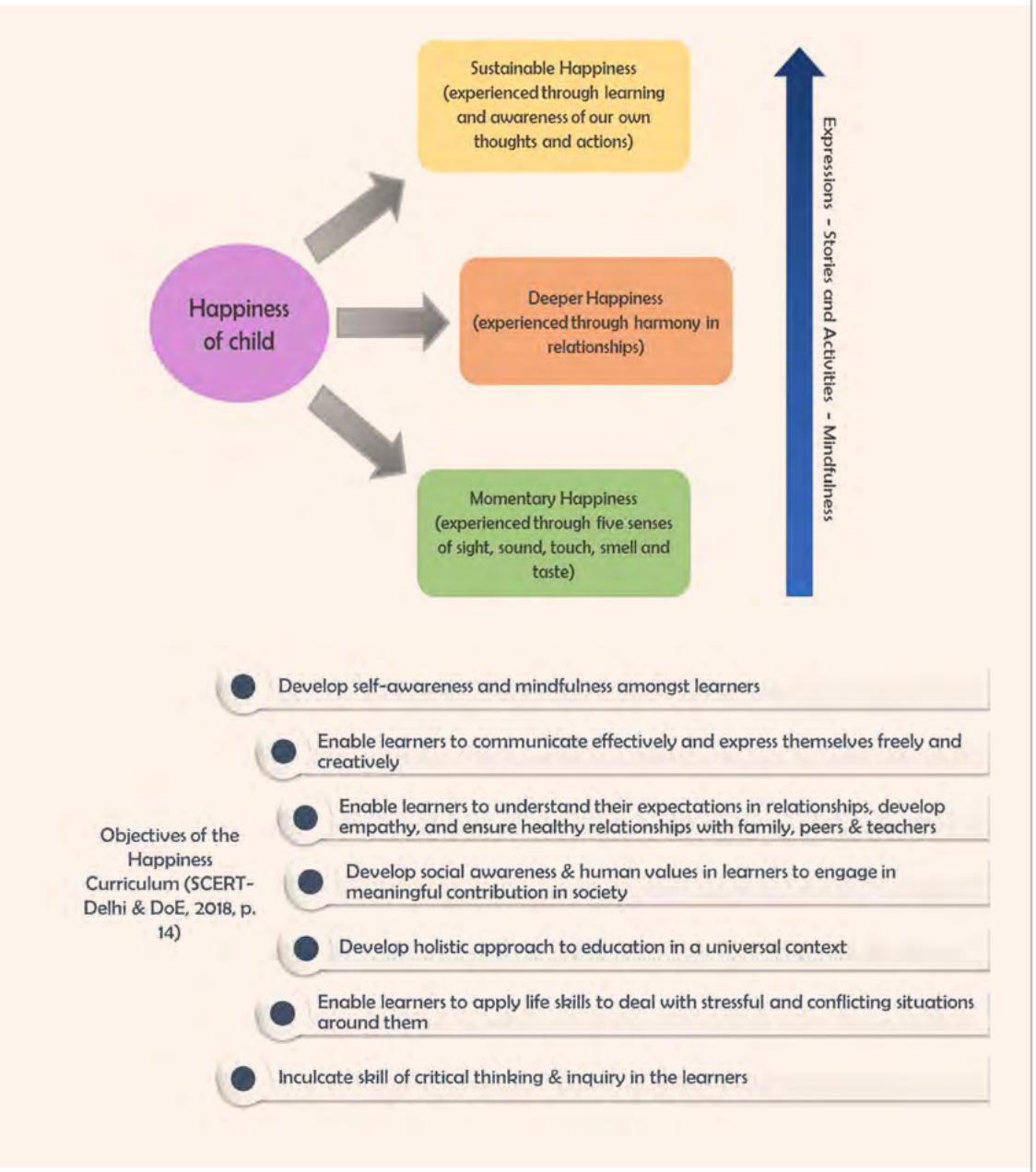

Figure 1. Happiness triad and the pedagogical practices adopted in happiness classes (SCERT-Delhi & DoE, 2019)

Indian philosopher A. Nagraj's (1999/2015) 'happiness triad': physical senses (labelled as *Momentary Happiness*), feelings within relationships (labelled as *Deeper Happiness*), and learning and awareness (labelled as *Sustainable Happiness*) (Figure 1). According to Nagraj's philosophy of *Madhyasth Darshan* or 'co-existential thought', human beings can experience happiness by developing an understanding of material, behavioral, intellectual and experiential aspects. This philosophical basis was enhanced by adopting contextualized and relatable empathy-based pedagogies focused on building social and emotional competencies in children in the Happiness Curriculum. This curriculum aims at enabling students to move beyond searching for happiness through materialistic means; rather, focusing on learning and awareness of self and others and inculcating human values to experience a sustainable form of happiness. Pedagogical practices include mindfulness, stories and activities, and expressions. This sets the curriculum apart as a culturally responsive SEL framework, which adopts a holistic approach to education in a universal context by blending ancient Indian traditions and scientific social and emotional learning concepts (Das & Ravindranath, 2022).

These objectives are like the five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies in the framework of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). In addition to the focus on developing social and emotional learning competencies among learners, which help them to become mindful, self-aware, manage emotions, think critically, and build positive relationships, the Happiness Curriculum aims at enabling learners to become socially aware and inculcate values to make meaningful contributions to society. Self-awareness is linked to social awareness as the development of social and emotional competencies equips learners with the ability to comprehend and react appropriately to interpersonal and societal challenges.

The idea of holistic education got lost in the modern linear,

industrialized education system, which is examination-oriented and largely a product of colonialism. The Happiness Curriculum is an attempt to reimagine the purpose of education by focusing on the holistic development of children. Brookings Institution partnered with Dream a Dream to publish a report entitled 'Development of Student and Teacher Measures of Happiness Curriculum factors' (Care et al., 2020). This report noted positive changes in the quality of teacher–student relationships, increased participation by students in class, and an ability to focus and be calm. Mindfulness, self-awareness and communication were found to be most strongly represented in the curriculum. Teachers appreciated the simple, intuitive, and interactive pedagogical methods and noted the importance of prioritizing values over academic success (Care et al., 2020). Students seem to gain greater proficiency in competencies such as decision-making, empathy, focus, and relationships. Therefore, the approach is not linear, nor limited to resolving problems of low learning outcomes and monitoring academic progress. It is to enable children to develop social and emotional competencies to transcend structural barriers and thrive in life. The Happiness Curriculum has created a sense of possibility amongst education stakeholders that radical change in education can be implemented at a large scale by shifting mindsets amongst students, teachers, parents and school leaders around what the purpose of education is and how schools can contribute to it.

The Happiness Curriculum and its pedagogical practices

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is one of the strongly represented components across the Happiness Curriculum. It aims to enable children to be mindful of their own emotions, thoughts and actions, reduce stress and become attentive as individuals. Classroom practices include starting the class with mindful check-in, followed by mindful seeing/listening activities, and ending the class with a mindful check-out. In addition to instructions such as closing their eyes and taking deep breaths, students in grade 1 are asked to be mindful of what sounds they can hear around them, what they can smell around them, what they can taste in their mouths and what things are touching their body, such as the chair, clothes etc. In higher grades, mindful walking, mindful drawing/scribbling, muscle relaxation exercise, and emotion characterizations are carried out. In grade 8, as part of an activity, students are asked to write five feelings and five thoughts that they have ever felt or experienced and share how their feelings and thoughts are different from each other. Finally, students are asked to share their experiences of practicing mindfulness at home and school, alone or with someone.

A child's mind is usually wandering and experiencing an array of thoughts and emotions. Mindful meditation can help bring a child's mind back to the present moment. It helps children to learn to be observant and conscious of the thoughts entering and leaving their mind, without judging them. Designed to enhance the focus and concentration of the children, mindfulness is practiced in a two-stage process in the happiness classes. First, classes begin with mindful meditation, which is aimed at relaxing and calming mind and body. Second, mindfulness activities enable children to become attentive towards the functioning of their five senses, the flow of thoughts in their mind, the experience of feelings, and the workings of their mind and body.

In the traditional Indian knowledge system, being mindful was given priority over memorizing facts (Sisodia, 2019). Mindfulness is rooted in Eastern religious and spiritual traditions. It is conceptualized and practiced in several ways in different Buddhist traditions and has been adapted in the positive psychology movement in the West. When it comes to the Happiness Curriculum, mindfulness has been adopted to promote 'self-awareness' among children. Therefore, mindfulness in this context is synonyms with notions such as 'to remember and recollect', 'bare attention' and 'establishing presence' (Bodhi, 2011).

Research on mindfulness-based interventions has demonstrated improvement in cognitive performance and resilience to stress (Zenner et al., 2014), conflict resolution and attention control (Baijal et al., 2011), and emotional stability and self-esteem, leading to enhanced happiness (Bajaj et al., 2019). In a recently developed SEL framework by UNESCO MGIEP, practicing mindfulness technique is associated with increased attention and awareness and emotional regulation (Duraiappah et al., 2020). The findings of the Brookings–Dream a Dream study highlight that mindfulness enables students to practice and improve their attention skills and to be present in the moment (Care et al., 2020). Students reported feeling recharged, calm, and relaxed. Practicing mindfulness has helped them to reflect before reacting. Examples include positive interactions with peers, reduction in fights over little things, improved concentration in studies, and reduced distraction. There is a conscious effort to ensure that mindfulness is not used for controlling or conditioning students. The intention is to help students feel centered, grounded, alive, and present in the moment. Therefore, mindfulness is aided by other experiential and reflective pedagogical practices such as storytelling, play/art-based activities, and expressions, which are discussed in the next sections.

Stories and activities

Even though in the past, schools in India have had value education or moral science lessons, they have not been taken seriously. Owing to the rigid, examination-based system, teachers have often used this period to cover their academic syllabus. But with a designated happiness period every day in schools, there is a platform to discuss topics that are relatable to students and impact their daily lives. Stories and activities are integral. Stories in the Happiness Curriculum have been carefully curated to reflect the real-life scenarios of ordinary people and focus on relationships, responsibilities towards others, finding a purpose in life, empathy, and gratitude. The stories are inspirational in nature but not

aimed at inculcating or developing moral values among children (Sisodia, 2019). After narrating the story in the class, the teacher uses the reference questions to initiate a discussion in the class. The questions following the stories are not meant to provide ideal answers. Instead of looking for a right answer, learners are encouraged to reflect on their own thoughts, actions and behavior by putting themselves in the scenario depicted in the story. To ensure learners draw their own inferences, the teachers do not ask what learners have learned from the story. Rather, they ask open-ended questions such as, 'Did you identify with the characters of the story?' 'What would your actions be if you were in a similar situation to the protagonist in the story?' Based on the responses of learners, the teacher delves deeper into the concept of happiness in the class.

Let us look at some examples of these storytelling and discussion sessions. We use three stories from the grade 8 handbook, which focuses on understanding happiness, the happy family and happy society to elaborate on momentary happiness, deeper happiness and sustainable happiness. In the story 'Rabia's needle', Rabia pretends to search for her lost needle outside her house and help the villagers identify the cause of their sorrow as they are busy criticising each other and therefore unhappy. When passers-by from the village enquire about why she is searching for the needle outside when it had fallen inside her house, Rabia replies that she is adopting the same method as them and says 'Every day I see you criticizing each other. You look for happiness in others' behavior, in their gifts, in the favors you receive from them, in the compliments you get, and, in the work others do for you. Look for happiness within'. After the story is introduced, students are asked: Have you criticized your friends or relatives in front of someone? If yes, what were the reasons? Were you searching for happiness in them? Why do people seem to be happy when they criticize others or prove them wrong? How would you feel if there was no one to appreciate your efforts? Would it affect your capability? This story revolves around the belief that happiness is found within oneself and is not

dependent on the actions and behavior of people around us. The questions prompt students to think about instances when they might have criticized others, how that made them feel, and how it might have made others feel.

In another story, 'He is my brother, not a burden', the focus is on building trust in family relationships and fulfilling the responsibilities without any complaints. This story revolves around a girl aged around 9–10 who is climbing the hill, carrying her younger brother on her shoulder. She is soaked in sweat but keeps climbing upwards. When she passes by two people, one of them says to her in an empathetic tone, 'Child, you are sweating. You must be tired from your brother's burden. We will carry him for a while in our arms and you will get some rest'. The girl looks at them and says, 'What are you saying? He might be a burden for you. But for me, he is my younger brother and not a burden'. The reflective questions for discussion in the class are: 'Why did the girl not consider her brother a burden?' 'Which relationships are not a burden for you? Why?' 'Why don't you feel burdened by the relationships that you accept wholeheartedly?' 'What is the difference between burden and responsibility?' 'What is the difference between perceiving relationship as a burden and relationship as a responsibility?' 'How can you bring harmony in family relationships? Give examples from your life.' 'What responsibilities do you take care of in your family and why?' This story is directed towards enabling students to think about how they can fulfil their responsibilities in the family. The story is relatable as it is situated in the context of learners who come from adversity. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often become caregivers for their younger siblings in scenarios such as the one in this story or when both parents are working for long hours to earn their living. Students are divided into groups of four or five and asked to discuss questions such as: 'What are your expectation from your parents, siblings and friends?' 'Are these expectations based on material things or also on feelings (love, affection, care)?' Students are then asked to share their views. Teachers use some prompts to guide the discussion such as: 'Are your expectations (the ones written by students) always met or not?' 'If the family member is unable to fulfil the expectations, is it because they lack intention or competence?' Students are given time at the end of each storytelling or activity session to sit quietly and reflect on the discussion.

In the story 'Happy society', there is a story of a king who sends a full glass of milk to the people seeking refuge in his country, to explain that the population of his country is large and cannot accommodate more people. The people mix sugar into the glass of milk and send it back. By this, they are sending a message to the king that they will assimilate in the population through their hard work and contribute to making his country prosperous in the future just as the sugar mixed into the milk and made it sweeter. This story is followed by an activity wherein students are divided into groups and asked to draft a plan to improve the school environment and include what, when, who, and how, while making the plan. Students then make a presentation of their plan in class. Teachers are instructed to praise each group for their efforts. This is to motivate students to become useful and responsible citizens and experience the joy of knowing their usefulness in the school. The activity is followed by students sharing their views on why should they work to improve school environment: 'What kind of contributions can students make to the school?' 'If all students contribute, what kind of changes can come about in school?' Through the story, students can understand the unique role of each individual in society and how integration of varied people, interests, and opinions can promote harmony and development in the society.

Oral story-telling helps to increase engagement of students in promoting happiness in classrooms (Fox Eades et al., 2013). The stories and activities in happiness classes enable students to develop 'social and emotional competency' skills which are a prerequisite to engaging in peaceful and harmonious social interactions (Trach et al., 2020). From the above discussion, we

can deduce the stories in this curriculum are based on enabling children to develop an understanding that momentary happiness obtained through mere fulfilment of desires is not long-lasting, and that deeper happiness can be found if they understand their role and responsibilities in relationships. By foregrounding student experiences and emotions, happiness classes encourage them to explore, discuss, reflect upon and analyse concepts related to happiness. Furthermore, when an individual reflects on their own behavior and undergoes the process of constructive learning and awareness, they can find meaning and purpose in life which is understood as a sustainable form of happiness.

Expression

The expression component in the Happiness Curriculum focuses on the natural desire of individuals to express thoughts and feelings. Students are encouraged to explore the definite role and purpose of their lives and reflect on their actions and behavior towards others. It is expected that when students realize that their value is determined by how effectively they can fulfil their responsibilities in family and society, they will become happy. The focus is on enabling them to understand the 'universal utility' of any substance in society. In grade 8, four integral elements of expression, also referred to as universal human values, are identified as trust, respect, gratitude, and affection. Table 1 presents an overview of the sessions on gratitude with objectives and questions that give students the opportunity to express themselves in class.

The emphasis is on three factors: explore, experience and express. The questions for discussion revolve around students identifying instances in which they recognize the efforts of those around them. It leads them to think about how they felt when they received help or support from others and thereby motivates them to express it towards others. This experience is then expressed in class through methods such as individual expression, sharing in pairs, and sharing in small groups. Other activities include designing a

OBJECTIVES	To orient student's mind towards others' contribution	To feel the emotion of gratitude
Questions for discussion	1 Share one good habit of yours. Who helped you develop the habit? 2 What are you good at – music, dance, writing, sports, or making something? Who helped you to learn this? 3 Who in your family or neighborhood helps you with your studies? 4 What are the things that you use daily which are made available to you because of others' hard work and toil in the society?	1 Who felt good about receiving help from someone in the past week? Who helped you? 2 How do you feel when you think about those who contributed to building your school? 3 In recent times, did it happen that you needed someone's help, but no one helped you? How did you feel in that situation?
OBJECTIVES	**To express the feeling of gratitude**	**To be able to contribute to the lives of others with the feeling of gratitude**
Questions for discussion	1 How do you express your gratitude towards the people who help you? 2 Write a letter to a family member, teacher, or friend, to express your gratitude and deliver/read it to them. 3 Express your gratitude towards a friend in the class. While doing so, tell them the ways in which they help you.	1 In what chores do you help your family at home? Who is relieved by your help? 2 How do you feel when you help someone to learn or understand something? Why? 3 How do you feel when you are not able to help someone in need? 4 Has it ever happened that a person helped you in some way and then one day mentioned that the help was a favor? If yes, how did you feel then?

Table 1. Lessons on gratitude – one of the elements of expression

colourful 'gratitude wall' where students write gratitude letters or notes to thank their family members.

Research studies have demonstrated the positive impact of gratitude on the happiness and well-being of children (Seligman et al., 2009; Tian et al., 2016). These studies found that students who wrote letters of gratitude or maintained records in a blessings journal reported an increase in optimism, positive emotions, and satisfaction. Teaching gratitude to students helps them experience the joy and satisfaction derived from selfless behavior and the actions of another. Similar trends have been observed in Delhi's happiness classes where students build deeper relationships by appreciating their teachers, peers, and families.

Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we have explored the different aspects of the Happiness Curriculum and described how they operate at three levels in the students' lives: intra-personal, inter-personal and societal. Mindfulness helps students to be self-aware, regulate and express their own emotions. Stories and activities enable them to put this into practice in their relationships with peers, parents, siblings and families, and to understand their role in society. Finally, students have a platform to express and share their determination, actions and experiences with others in happiness classes. While the Happiness Curriculum is enabling students to build social and emotional skills to lead a meaningful life, systemic efforts directed at addressing the root causes of poverty and inequity in the society are vital to promote their happiness and well-being. In this regard, the steps taken by the Government of India for children from disadvantaged backgrounds include providing free and compulsory education for children in the 6–14 age group, free uniforms, textbooks, and midday meals to students at elementary level in government schools. In addition to these measures, since 2015, the Delhi government has undertaken a

wide range of other interventions aimed at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all. They have consistently increased and prioritized the budget allocation to the education sector, upgraded school infrastructure, implemented teaching and learning reforms to strengthen students' foundational literacy and numeracy skills, and introduced a leadership development program to develop the capacity of teachers and headteachers. To address adolescents' concerns related to rising unemployment in the country, the Delhi government has also launched the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum for grade 9 to 12 (15–18-year-olds) which enables students to engage with entrepreneurs and understand a wide variety of career paths. It is worth noting the analogous relationship between the happiness (grade nursery to grade 8) and entrepreneurship (grade 9 to 12) curricula. While the Happiness Curriculum equips students with the social and emotional skills and attitudes required to navigate the social and economic challenges and opportunities in the world, the Entrepreneurship Curriculum helps them apply their skills and harness their talent to make meaningful contributions to society. Therefore, the Happiness Curriculum is not focused only on teaching and learning about surface level happiness. The philosophy embedded within the curriculum is that happiness and social and emotional well-being, as concepts and practices, should be freely available for all students but more so for students whose lives are particularly precarious. This does not negate the existence of caste, gender, class, and other social factors that oppress students since sometimes classrooms in India do inadvertently, or otherwise, perpetuate inequalities. However, the other possibility that has opened up due to the happiness classes is that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can find connectedness and social solidarity with others and find tools to question and resist structures and violence in other spaces. It is important that persistent empathetic efforts are undertaken to ensure that happiness classes provide a safe and supportive space for such students to

share their feelings, experiences, and find their own voice. For this to happen, the government and the school system will have to constantly monitor, track, assess and focus on curriculum review, training of teachers, and incorporate feedback from students.

We also recognize the need to address systemic sources of stress such as rigid assessments and grading patterns in schools and systemic barriers arising out of social and economic status, religion, caste, and gender which lead to inequity and discrimination in schools. Therefore, we recommend more research, deliberation, and collaboration to adopt an intersectional and equity lens to social and emotional learning to create a transformative shift in the education system in India. We hope that the Happiness Curriculum will open up conversations around changing the school calendar which has been sacrosanct for decades, introducing new curricula that promote teaching and learning of social and emotional skills, attitudes and behaviors, adopting innovative and interactive pedagogical approaches, and changing the role of the teacher from a deliverer of knowledge to becoming a facilitator of learning and growth for every child to thrive. We do not claim that the Happiness Curriculum has achieved complete success on these fronts, but it has indeed started an important conversation around these shifts in the Indian education system like never before.

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10

How can socio-emotional learning support girls' education and gender equality? Evidence from RISE Ethiopia before and during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Despite increasing attention to the relationship between children's socio-emotional learning (SEL), mental health and well-being and their education in the Global South, less attention has been given to the implications for girls' education and gender equality specifically. In this paper, we start to address this gap drawing on evidence from the RISE Ethiopia research study. To set the context, we first consider the gendered inequalities that impact girls' education and gender equality in Ethiopia more generally and how these inequalities have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Against this backdrop, we take account of the potential benefits that strengthening girls' SEL may have for their education, mental health and well-being. Second, drawing on quantitative and qualitative evidence from our RISE Ethiopia research both prior to, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, we explore the factors that may have influenced girls' SEL during this time, changes to girls' SEL over the course of the COVID-19 school closures, and the association between girls' SEL, their academic learning and mental health and well-being once schools reopened. Finally, reflecting on the evidence, we outline potential opportunities for strengthening girls' SEL, mental health and well-being in school through girls' clubs and other means.

Comment l'apprentissage socio-émotionnel peut-il soutenir l'éducation des filles et l'égalité des sexes ? Les données de RISE Ethiopie avant et pendant COVID-19

Malgré l'attention croissante accordée à la relation entre l'apprentissage socio-émotionnel (ASE), la santé mentale et le bien-être des enfants et leur éducation dans les pays du Sud, les implications pour l'éducation des filles et l'égalité des sexes ont été moins étudiées. Dans cet article, nous commençons à combler cette lacune en nous appuyant sur les données de l'étude de recherche RISE Ethiopie. Pour définir le contexte, nous examinons d'abord les inégalités entre les sexes qui ont un impact sur l'éducation des filles et l'égalité des sexes en Éthiopie de manière plus générale et la manière dont ces inégalités ont été exacerbées pendant la pandémie de COVID-19. Dans ce contexte, nous tenons compte des avantages potentiels que le renforcement de l'ASE des filles peut avoir pour leur éducation, leur santé mentale et leur bien-être. Ensuite, en nous appuyant sur les données quantitatives et qualitatives de notre recherche RISE Ethiopie avant et pendant la pandémie du COVID-19, nous explorons les facteurs qui ont pu influencer l'ASE des filles pendant cette période, les changements de l'ASE des filles au cours de la fermeture des écoles du COVID-19, et l'association entre l'ASE des filles, leur apprentissage académique et leur santé mentale et bien-être une fois les écoles rouvertes. Enfin, à la lumière de ces données, nous décrivons les possibilités de renforcer l'ASE des filles, leur santé mentale et leur bien-être à l'école par le biais des clubs de filles et d'autres moyens.

¿Cómo puede el aprendizaje socioemocional apoyar a la educación de las niñas y la igualdad de género? Datos de RISE Etiopía antes y durante COVID-19

A pesar de que cada vez se presta más atención a la relación entre el aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) de niños y niñas, la salud mental, el bienestar y la educación en el Sur Global, se ha prestado menos atención a las implicancias en la educación de las niñas y la igualdad de género específicamente. En este documento, empezamos a abordar esta carencia basándonos en los datos del estudio de investigación RISE Etiopía. A modo de contextualizar, primero consideramos las desigualdades de género que afectan a la educación de las niñas y a la igualdad de género en Etiopía de forma más general y cómo estas desigualdades se han exacerbado durante la pandemia. En este marco, consideramos los beneficios potenciales que el fortalecimiento del SEL en niñas puede tener para su educación, salud mental y bienestar. En segundo lugar, basándonos en evidencia cuantitativa y cualitativa de RISE Etiopía, tanto antes como durante la pandemia COVID-19, exploramos los factores que pueden haber influido en el SEL de las niñas durante este tiempo, los cambios en el SEL de las niñas en el transcurso del cierre de las escuelas por la pandemia, y la relación entre el SEL de las niñas, su aprendizaje académico, salud mental y su bienestar una vez que las escuelas volvieron a abrir. Por último, reflexionamos basándonos en la evidencia, delineamos posibles oportunidades para fortalecer el SEL de las niñas, su salud mental y bienestar en la escuela a través de los Clubes de Niñas y otros medios.

1 Introduction

In line with the focus on socio-emotional learning (SEL) in the education Sustainable Development Goal (Chabott, Sinclair, Smart, 2019), UNESCO's (2021a) *Futures of Education* report sets out the need to harness the transformational potential of education as a route for sustainable collective futures. Supporting girls' SEL may have an important role to play in increasing girls' education, mental health and well-being and gender equality more broadly. While SEL will not solve the deep-seated gender inequalities within the education system or within the broader society, it can help to promote the knowledge, beliefs, practices and relationships to examine and interrupt inequalities and biases and to foster the skills that students need to work together towards a more just and sustainable future (Schlund, Jagers & Schlinger, 2020).

Most evidence on SEL has emerged from the Global North, meaning that more evidence from the Global South is urgently needed (Yorke, Meshesha, Rose, 2021). A culturally and contextually relevant understanding of SEL is important, which considers how different skills may be valued in different cultural contexts and the factors that affect their development. For example, in individualist versus collectivist settings, there may be different understandings of self and different practices of social engagement and communication, relationships may be valued differently and may conform to rules differently, with access to social support may differ.

In addition to the importance of taking account of different cultural contexts, attention is also needed to how the development of children's SEL may differ for boys and girls within a particular context. There is a significant knowledge gap in our understanding of how gender norms and expectations may influence the development of SEL for boys and girls differently, including the different skills that are valued for boys and girls, and how processes of socialization for boys and girls affects their SEL development. Furthermore, these gendered differences and their implications for SEL may become more pronounced over time, for example as girls enter adolescence when they face even more restrictive gender norms.

Evidence from our Research for Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Ethiopia research study provides important insights into the

gender differences in the development of students' SEL within the context of Ethiopia. RISE Ethiopia is a longitudinal study examining the government's nationwide quality education reform program aimed at improving learning outcomes, with a focus on equity. This program has a specific focus on girls' education, and outlines a number of strategies to address gender norms and improve girls' education, including through the empowerment of girls through girls' clubs, which are intended to act as a safe space for female students to meet and discuss the issues that they face, identify challenges and receive life skills training. Girls' clubs are also identified as having a role in engaging boys and helping change their attitudes toward gender equality and help to prevent gender-based violence. Given these aims, it is important to consider the potential of girls' clubs to provide a route for supporting girls' SEL and promoting gender equality.

Our RISE Ethiopia research has so far included the collection of quantitative data from 168 school and community sites in 2018/19, accompanied by in-depth qualitative case studies in five of these sites in 2020. Our 2021 survey included students who were in grade 1 in 2018/19, most of whom had reached grade 3 (and were approximately 10 years old); and those who had progressed from grade 4 and were mainly in grade 6 (approximately 12 years old) (see Bayley et al., 2021, for more information). In the 2018/19 round of data collection, we included measures of students' social skills. In the latest round of data collection, we expanded our focus on SEL and included measures of emotional regulation, student efficacy and social skills, as well as students' mental health and well-being, and these scales were administered to students just after schools reopened (early 2021). We developed our measures through an iterative process in close collaboration with local experts (Yorke, Meshesha, Rose, 2021). Our study design enables us to explore the relationship between girls' education, SEL and mental health and well-being both during the school closures and after schools reopen, while our qualitative data provides insights into the potential role of girls' clubs in supporting girls' SEL and gender equality.

2 Girls' education, gender equality and SEL

Patterns of progress on girls' education and gender equality

Girls' access to primary school has expanded rapidly in Ethiopia over the past two decades, yet many challenges remain. According to official statistics, while almost all girls enrol in school only half of girls transition from lower to upper primary school, and even fewer complete a full cycle of primary education, often leaving school without even learning the basics in numeracy and literacy (MoE, 2020). Once they exit school, many girls - particularly those from low-income families living in rural areas – have no option other than to enter marriage (Young Lives, 2021).

The intersection of economic inequalities with restrictive gender norms and practices limits girls' attendance, progression, and learning. Ethiopia is a highly patriarchal society, and gender norms and practices impact the lives of many girls and women, especially those living in rural areas. Gender norms refer to the ideas about how women and men should be and should act, which are internalized early in life and are reinforced through the life cycle through gender socialization and stereotypes. In rural areas in Ethiopia in particular, girls and young women are often taught from a young age to be submissive and to 'keep silent' and have limited decision-making power both within the household and in the wider community, in contrast to males who dominate the public sphere and have greater access to resources and decision-making power (Yorke, Gilligan, Alemu, 2021).

These gender norms influence girls' opportunities and outcomes in school, the household and the wider community. In many cases the school environment is not gender-friendly, with low proportions of female teachers and leaders and limited gender-sensitive facilities, while gender biases within the classroom negatively impact girls' self-esteem (Kassahun, 2004). In the household, girls and women perform the majority of the domestic

labor, which limits their education, yet this work is overlooked and undervalued by family and community members (Yorke, Gilligan, Alemu, 2021). In the wider community, girls experience restricted physical mobility, particularly as they enter into adolescence, and have more restricted peer networks than boys (Jones et al., 2019). Rates of gender-based violence are also high and this violence is often tolerated by the wider society (Presler-Marshall et al., 2020).

In terms of mental health, studies have shown how women experience significantly higher levels of serious mental illness than men in rural Ethiopia due to a range of socio-cultural factors and higher levels of physical and social isolation compared with men (Ghebrehiwet et al., 2020). Little is known about girls' psychosocial well-being, but important evidence from the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) study suggests that mental health problems affect a considerable number of adolescent girls, which they found to be associated with restrictive gender norms and practices, while positive family relationships and feeling loved and respected were important protective factors (Baird et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2019).

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' education and gender equality

As elsewhere, the pandemic has had serious impacts on the livelihoods of families in Ethiopia, with even greater impacts on girls and women (CARE International, 2021). Food prices are rising and female household members have emphasized how they have been unable to provide food for their families (CARE International, 2021; Jones et al., 2020). Female household members are likely to experience the more serious consequences, given that they are more likely to forego meals amidst food shortages (Yorke, Gilligan, Alemu, 2021). Traditional gender norms have been reinforced and girls and women have experienced increased levels of domestic work and increased exposure to gender-based violence (Jones et al., 2020). Evidence from both the GAGE and Young Lives studies have shown how there is an increased risk of child marriage linked with interrupted education, uncertainty about the future, economic pressures and having less negotiating power to be able to resist marriage (Jones et al., 2020; Jones et al, 2020; Young Lives, 2021).

These challenges have led to a deterioration of the mental health of girls and women. Across a range of countries and contexts, including Ethiopia, girls and young women have reported experiencing greater levels of anxiety, stress and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic (Porter et al. 2021; Young Lives, 2021). Both the GAGE and Young Lives studies found that being unable to continue their education has become a particular source of anxiety for girls, especially due to associated pressures to enter marriage (Jones et al., 2020; Young Lives, 2021). Both studies also identified how girls have experienced greater levels of social isolation and more limited social contact during the pandemic than boys, partly linked with the school closures. Evidence from our RISE Ethiopia research suggested that girls have missed out on a range of important in-school supports as a result of school closures including interaction with peers, emotional and psychosocial support and access to material support (Yorke, Rose, Woldehanna & Hailu, 2021). Furthermore, already limited access to health services and mental health and psychosocial support have become even more restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic (CARE International, 2021).

The potential benefits of girls' socio-emotional learning

As the literature above indicates, girls and young women face multiple and intersecting inequalities that limit their education and outcomes, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fostering girls' SEL may help girls to better understand themselves, to identify the inequalities operating in their communities that impact their daily lives and choices, and to formulate collaborative solutions to address these

challenges. Enhancing girls' SEL may provide an important route for female empowerment, raising girls' self-esteem and confidence, improving their education outcomes, promoting their positive mental health and well-being, and contributing to gender equality.

Findings from the Girls' Educational Challenge have shown that targeted interventions aimed at improving girls' SEL were successful and had a positive impact on their education. Relatedly, in a systematic review of child marriage prevention programs, Malhotra, Warner, McGonagle and Lee-Rife (2011) found that empowering girls with information, skills and social support demonstrated the most consistent results in helping to end child marriage. Promoting girls' SEL may also help to increase their ability to convince others of the need to support their education (Ashraf, Bau, Low and McGinn, 2020) and to speak up and contribute inside the classroom, helping to counteract gendered biases held by teachers (Kassahun, 2004). Within classrooms, SEL programs and pedagogy may help to change perceptions and behaviors towards gender equality amongst both male and female students, as has been shown in other contexts. In Uganda, Malhotra, Ayele, Zheng & Amor (2021) found that a SEL curriculum implemented in 10 schools led to improvements in SEL and perceptions of gender equality. The program was also linked with improvements in mental health for girls who participated in the program.

Together, these benefits may help to support girls' education and their trajectories beyond education, including their entry into the labor markets. This may help to further increase girls' agency and decision-making power both within the household and the wider community, enabling them to make choices about the lives they wish to lead and to work together collaboratively to challenge gender norms and practices and encourage female empowerment (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Yet it is important to note that enhancing girls' SEL will not eliminate the deep-rooted structural inequalities that limit their opportunities and outcomes; strategies to promote girls' SEL must go hand-in-hand with broader efforts to transform the institutions that underpin and perpetuate gender equality at multiple levels of society (Yorke, Rose & Pankhurst, 2021).

3 Evidence from RISE Ethiopia

Building on the literature reviewed above, we now look at the relationship between girls' SEL, academic learning and mental health and well-being, both during and after the COVID-19 school closures, drawing on quantitative evidence from our RISE Ethiopia study during this time. We focus on three specific aspects of SEL which we believe have particular relevance in the context of the pandemic: emotional regulation (how students cope with the challenges they face), self-efficacy (their beliefs in their ability to achieve certain goals), and social skills (how they communicate with others and elicit support) (see Yorke, Rose, Bayley, Wole and Ramchandani, 2021 for further information on the measures used, and on the sample included). These aspects of SEL were measured using a set of self-report scales used in related settings and adapted by the research team to the Ethiopian context (see Bayley et al., 2021 for more information). Examples of self-report questions included 'It is easy for me to achieve my goals' (emotional regulation) and 'I feel confident talking to others' (social skills). Answers to the questions were reported on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'). In addition, we explore the role of girls' clubs in supporting girls' SEL, education and gender equality drawing on evidence from our qualitative study.

Girls' SEL during the COVID-19 school closures

The COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures disproportionately impacted girls and women and led to increased domestic work burdens, limited peer interaction and increased social isolation, which in turn had negative impacts for their education and mental health. In our RISE Ethiopia sample, very

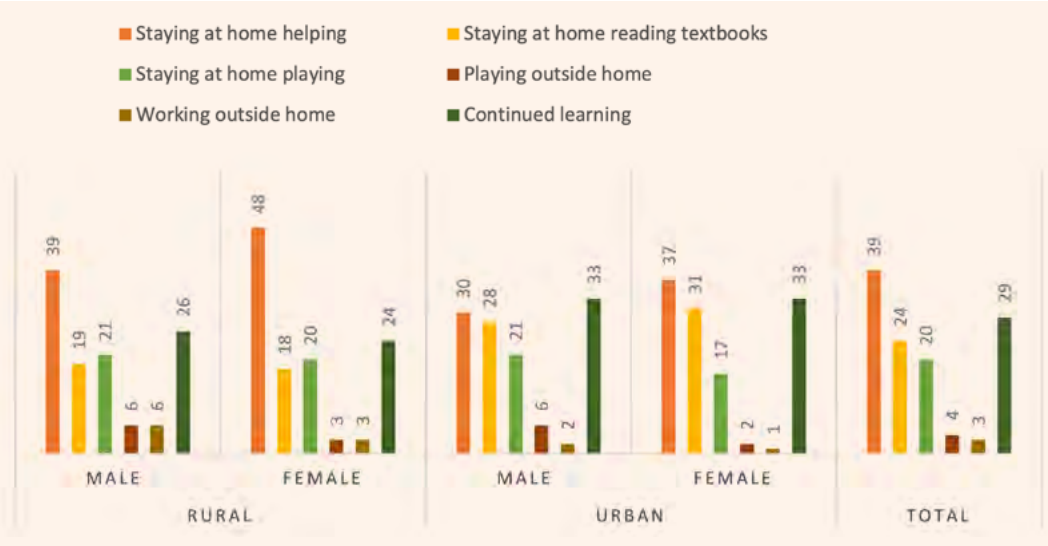

Figure 1: Students' main reported activities during the COVID-19 school closures across gender, rural-urban location and primary school level

few students (29%) reported continuing learning during the school closures, with rural female students least likely to report continuing learning (24%) (see Figure 1). Rather, students' main reported activity during this time was 'staying at home helping', with female students in rural areas most likely to report staying at home helping (48%), and we found that female students who listed staying at home helping as their main activity were less likely to report continuing learning during the pandemic. Students also reported limited physical mobility and social isolation during the pandemic, with few indicating that they spent time outside the house playing or working, especially female students. Undoubtedly, these challenges are likely to have negatively impacted students' SEL and mental health and well-being.

Importantly, students who did continue learning indicated that this was mostly self-directed through reading books at home in addition to completing homework provided by caregivers. This points to an important role for SEL (e.g., self-efficacy and social

support) in students' ability to continue distance learning during the COVID-19 school closures. Therefore, we find that the school closures had an impact on students' SEL but also that students' SEL was important for helping them to cope during this time.

Girls' SEL and its association with learning and mental health and well-being after schools reopened

Perhaps unsurprisingly, we found that female students were significantly less likely than their male counterparts to return to school once schools reopened (Bayley et al., under review). For (grade 6) students who did return to school, we found that their reported levels of social skills had decreased during the period of the school closures, with rural female students experiencing the sharpest decline (Figure 2). This is likely to be linked to their

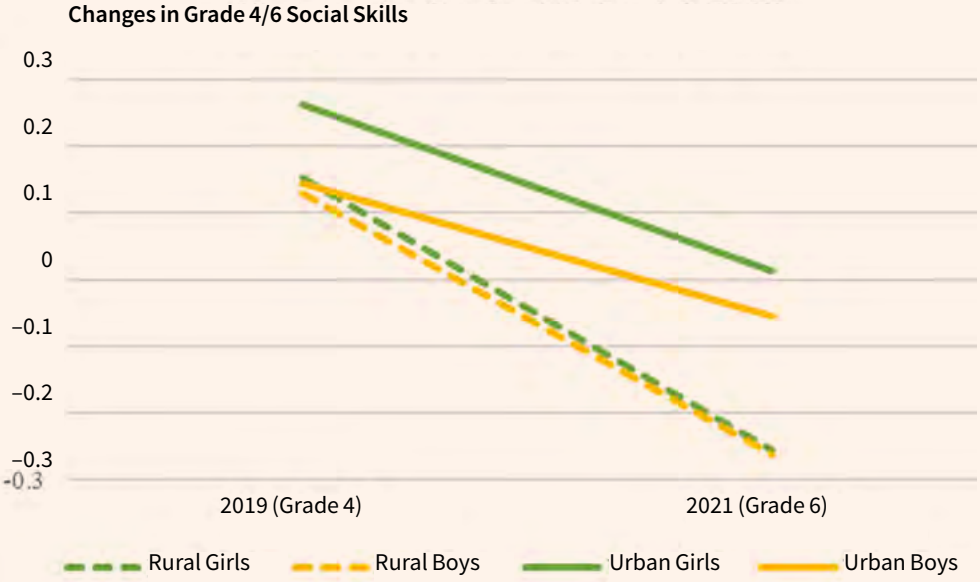

Figure 2: Changes in students' social skills before and after the COVID-19 school closures across gender and rural–urban location
[Source: Bayley et al., under review]

	Maths	Mental health & well-being	Social skills	Emotional regulation
Mental health & well-being	0.27			
Social skills	0.35	0.80		
Emotional regulation	0.19	0.71	0.74	
Self-efficacy	0.21	0.65	0.69	0.76

Table 1: Associations between (grade 6) girls' academic learning, SEL and mental health and well-being (Correlation co-efficients)

Note: Correlation coefficients measure the strength of the relationship between two variables, ranging between 0 -1 with values closer to 1 indicating a stronger relationship. All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level

restricted mobility and social isolation during the school closures. In addition to lower levels of social skills, we found that rural girls also reported lower levels of emotional regulation, self-efficacy and mental health and well-being than their urban counterparts after schools reopened. It seems that the different challenges faced by rural and urban girls had consequences for their SEL and mental health and well-being, highlighting the importance of taking into account the context within which girls are located.

We use maths scores as a proxy for academic learning and find that all students showed some improvement in their scores over time, but to a much smaller degree than would have been expected had the school closures not taken place (Bayley et al., under review.). Strong positive associations were found between all aspects of girls' SEL measured (social skills, emotional regulation, self-efficacy) and their academic learning (maths) and mental health and well-being (Table 1).

As seen in Table 1, there are strong positive relationships between all aspects of students' reported SEL and their reported mental health and well-being. Students' social skills, emotional regulation and self-efficacy are all found to have strong positive associations with mental health and well-being. This evidence suggests that SEL skills have an important role to play in girls' academic learning and mental health and well-being and that these effects

are bi-directional and multiplicative (see also Bayley et al., under review). Therefore, while the widening inequalities have negatively impacted girls' SEL, our evidence also points to an important role for SEL in helping to remediate some of these inequalities. We now turn to consider the role of girls' clubs as one possible route for strengthening girls' SEL in the school setting.

Girls' clubs as a route for strengthening girls' SEL

In our RISE Ethiopia qualitative study – carried out in February 2020, just before the COVID-19 school closures – we conducted interviews with girls' club focal teachers and focus groups with students' attending the girls' club in five school and community sites. We wanted to understand the type of supports that girls' clubs provided to female students. Across the five girls' clubs, membership usually started when a student reached upper primary school (i.e. grade five) and while members were predominantly girls, in some cases male students also participated. The frequency of the girls' club meetings differed across our sample. In the urban capital, Addis Ababa, the girls' club met every day, but in other locations it met once a week or even twice or three times a year. Therefore, the level of support received by female students varied considerably across location.

Nevertheless, we find that girls' clubs may provide important in-school supports for girls including social support and peer interaction, access to information and resources and the opportunity to develop their SEL, which in turn may contribute to improved education outcomes and greater gender equality. Female students and teachers discussed the positive role the girls' club played in providing girls with information, resources and support, building their skills and confidence and providing them with a platform to identify and discuss the inequalities that impact their daily lives and formulate solutions. One student in the Benishangul Gumuz region reported that the girls' club '…advises and encourages girls to become more confident, to discuss the

challenges that they face' including heavy domestic work burdens, menstruation and pressure to enter marriage. Similarly, in Addis Ababa, one teacher explained the important role of the girls' club in enhancing girls' self-confidence and agency:

The girls' club aims at boosting the confidence of girls in their homes, at school and their future life... We educate the students on how they can develop self-confidence and the ability to effectively manage their family and work....they will be able to influence the whole community if they are educated and enabled well.

As illustrated in this quotation, building girls' SEL may help to empower girls and women to address the challenges they face in the household and the wider community. Female students in Addis Ababa also discussed the important role of the girls' club in engaging male students in efforts to advance gender equality and helping to change their behavior and attitudes: '[Male students] who are participating in the [girls' club] are getting better knowledge about the challenges faced by girls...and they are improving their behavior towards girls'. This suggests that the girls' club may provide multiple routes for improving girls' education and gender equality, through building their SEL and changing the attitudes and behavior of their male peers and wider community members.

Despite the important role of girls' clubs, we found that the level of support provided by the girls' club to students varied considerably across regions and rural-urban locations – although girls' clubs are well established in Addis Ababa, they are often not fully operational outside the capital (Tafere et al., under review). Furthermore, not all female students have access to the support provided by the girls' club, particularly younger female students and those from low-income families living in rural and remote locations.

4 Summary

In this paper we have explored the linkages between girls' education, gender equality and SEL, prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, including during the school closures and

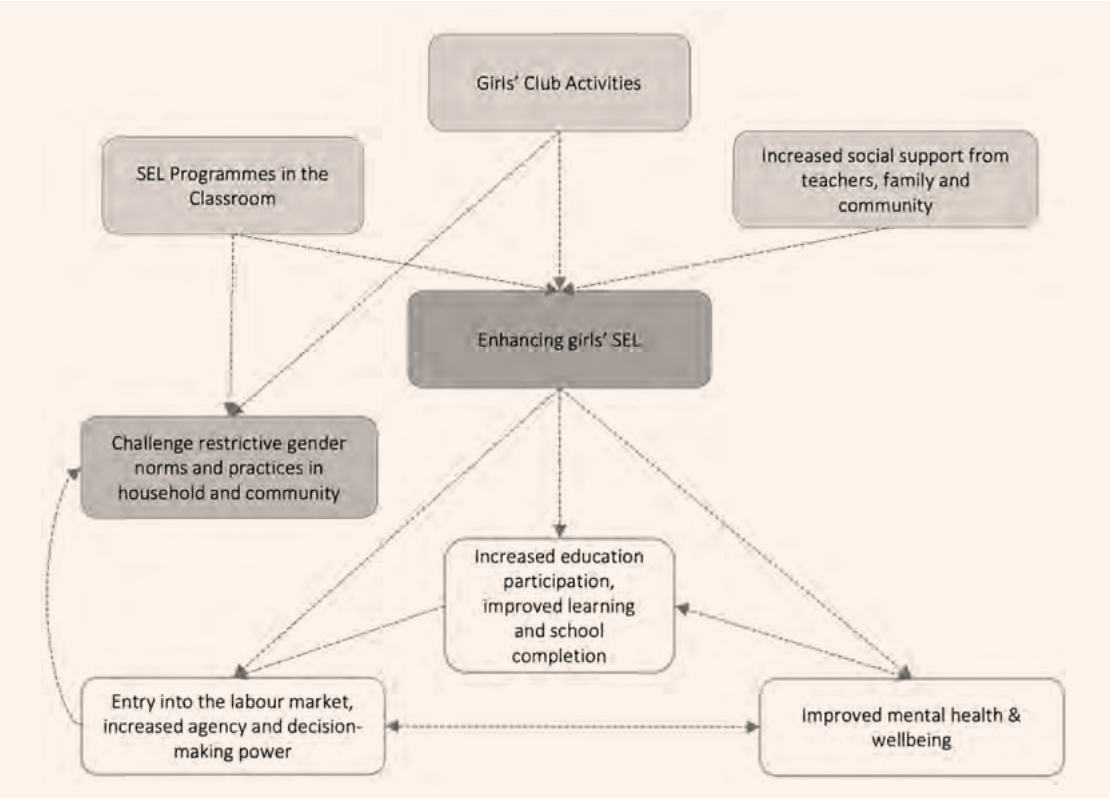

Figure 3: Proposed pathways for improving girls' SEL and potential impact on girls' education and gender equality

just after schools reopened. We have found that girls' increased household responsibilities, social isolation and limited access to education have had a negative impact on their SEL and mental health and being, especially those living in rural areas. Yet, while the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the fragility of the gains made in relation to girls' education and gender equality, we suggest that supporting girls' SEL may have an important role to play in increasing girls' education, mental health and well-being and gender equality more broadly.

In Figure 3, we suggest potential routes through which girls' SEL may be supported, including through girls' clubs activities, SEL

programs in the classroom and support from teachers, family and the community. As noted earlier, school-based program using SEL may help to change young people's perceptions of and behaviors towards gender equality (Malhotra et al., 2021). Enhancing girls' SEL may help them to better cope with the challenges that they face, by enhancing their belief in their ability to achieve the outcomes they value. It may also help them to interact with others and elicit support and contribute to positive mental health and well-being. In turn, as girls move into adulthood, these skills may lead to greater agency and decision-making power within the household and community, and also help them to challenge the gendered inequalities operating their communities and identify solutions to tackle these inequalities. Our findings point to an important role for girls' clubs in supporting girls' SEL. To be effective, the support provided through clubs must be strengthened and expanded for all female students, especially those who are most marginalized. Finally, efforts to improve girls' SEL must go hand-in-hand with broader efforts to address the structural inequalities that limit girls' opportunities and outcomes.

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11

Social and emotional learning for vulnerable and marginalized children and young people

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ABSTRACT
Social and emotional learning (SEL) has been on the rise in recent decades in various countries and cultures across the globe. Its rise is not only a reflection of the increasing social and emotional challenges that children and young people are facing in the twenty first century and the need for education to address such issues, but also a result of the increasing evidence that SEL has social, emotional and academic benefits. Universal, school-based SEL has been found to be particularly helpful to support the social and emotional needs of vulnerable and marginalized children. In this chapter, we argue that SEL as a universal, inclusive approach is very well placed to effectively address the social and emotional needs of vulnerable and marginalized children and young people, both to promote their positive development and to prevent social, emotional and behavior difficulties. Universal interventions, however, may need to be complemented by additional targeted interventions. Integrated multi-tiered interventions within an inclusive whole school approach will ensure that vulnerable and marginalized children are more likely to be reached and supported without the risk of labelling and stigmatization.

L'apprentissage social et émotionnel pour les enfants et les jeunes vulnérables et marginalisés

L'apprentissage social et émotionnel (ASE) a connu un essor au cours des dernières décennies dans divers pays et cultures du monde. Cet essor reflète non seulement les défis sociaux et émotionnels croissants auxquels les enfants et les jeunes sont confrontés au XXIe siècle et la nécessité pour l'éducation de s'attaquer à ces problèmes, mais aussi les preuves de plus en plus nombreuses des avantages sociaux, émotionnels et scolaires de l'ASE. L'ASE universel en milieu scolaire s'est avéré particulièrement utile pour répondre aux besoins sociaux et émotionnels des enfants vulnérables et marginalisés. Dans ce chapitre, nous soutenons que l'ASE comme approche universelle et inclusive est très bien placée pour répondre efficacement aux besoins sociaux et émotionnels des enfants et des jeunes vulnérables et marginalisés, à la fois pour promouvoir leur développement positif et pour prévenir les difficultés sociales, émotionnelles et comportementales. Les interventions universelles necessiteront toutefois d'être complétées par des interventions supplémentaires ciblées. Des interventions intégrées à plusieurs niveaux dans le cadre d'une approche inclusive de l'ensemble de l'école garantiront que les enfants vulnérables et marginalisés auront plus de chances d'être atteints et soutenus sans risque d'étiquetage et de stigmatisation.

Aprendizaje socioemocional para niños, niñas y adolescentes vulnerables y marginados

El aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) ha ido en aumento en las últimas décadas en varios países y culturas de todo el mundo. Este auge no es sólo un reflejo de los crecientes retos sociales y emocionales a los que se enfrentan los niños, niñas y adolescentes en el siglo XXI y de la necesidad de que la educación aborde estos problemas, sino también el resultado de la creciente evidencia de que el aprendizaje socioemocional tiene

beneficios sociales, emocionales y académicos. Se ha encontrado que el SEL universal basado en la escuela es particularmente útil para atender las necesidades sociales y emocionales de los niños y niñas vulnerables y marginados. En este capítulo, sostenemos que el SEL como enfoque universal e inclusivo está muy bien situado para abordar eficazmente las necesidades sociales y emocionales de niños, niñas y adolescentes vulnerables y marginados, tanto para promover su desarrollo como para prevenir dificultades sociales, emocionales y de comportamiento. Estas intervenciones universales, sin embargo, podrían requerir ser complementadas con intervenciones específicas adicionales. Las intervenciones integradas de varios niveles dentro de un enfoque escolar inclusivo garantizarán que los niños y niñas vulnerables y marginados tengan más probabilidades de formar parte de las intervenciones sin el riesgo de ser etiquetados y estigmatizados.

Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a strengths-based approach that promotes the social and emotional competence of children and young people. It helps to promote positive social and academic outcomes such as social and emotional competences, positive attitudes, prosocial behavior and academic learning, while decreasing internalizing behaviors such as anxiety and depression, and externalizing behaviors such as violence and anti-social behavior (Cefai et al, 2018; Durlak et al, 2011; Goldberg et al, 2008; Sklad et al, 2012). SEL is primarily a universal intervention approach, targeting all students at school, making use of instructional, relational and organizational strategies within a systemic and inclusive perspective (Cefai et al, 2018). There has been less attention, however, on how SEL may support the social and emotional needs of vulnerable and marginalized children such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic minorities and children with disability. This paper discusses how SEL may address the needs of such children within an inclusive whole school approach.

Universal SEL for vulnerable and marginalized students

Evidence from various reviews of studies shows that universal SEL interventions benefit all students at school across diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds (Durlak et al, 2011; Sklad et al, 2012; Taylor et al, 2017; Weare and Nind, 2011). Durlak et al.'s (2011) seminal meta-analysis reported that SEL works for all schoolchildren, with positive adjustment for children coming from a range of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds (though nearly one third of the studies contained no information on student ethnicity or socioeconomic status). Likewise, Taylor et al.'s review (2017) found that positive outcomes were similar regardless of students' race, socioeconomic background, or school location. Other reviews (e.g., Clarke et al, 2015; Farahmand et al, 2011; Sanchez et al, 2018; Weare and Nind, 2011) reported that universal SEL has been found to be particularly effective for vulnerable and marginalized students. Such children may have more pressing social and emotional needs and thus more likely to benefit from SEL interventions.

Furthermore, universal SEL helps to provide access to psychological resources necessary for healthy social and emotional development, which vulnerable and marginalized children may lack in other systems in their lives such as family, community and peer group. In this respect, it operates as an early intervention – a preventive strategy to promote equity by directing the developmental trajectory of vulnerable and marginalized children towards more positive outcomes (McClelland et al, 2017). Clarke et al. (2015) found that interventions aimed at increasing social and emotional competences and reducing problem behaviors (aggression, violence and substance misuse) were particularly effective with children and young people most at risk of developing such behaviors. Weare and Nind's (2011) meta-analysis reported that whilst universal approaches had a positive impact on the wellbeing and mental health of both normally developing children

and young people as well as those at risk in their development, they appeared to be particularly effective for the latter group. The systematic review of SEL studies with marginalized children by Farahmand et al (2011) found that universal interventions were more effective than targeted interventions for such children.

Another advantage of school-based universal SEL interventions is that since these are addressed to all students at school, they take place within an inclusive setting, with less likelihood of labelling and stigmatization. SEL becomes part of the mainstream culture at the school, with the whole school community engaged in its promotion and application in daily school life. There is also less likelihood of 'opportunity cost' for vulnerable and marginalized children who may otherwise miss other curricular activities in order to attend targeted SEL sessions. Furthermore, within such learning contexts, vulnerable children also have the opportunity to observe and work with more socially and emotionally competent peers who thus serve as good role models for the development of their own social and emotional competences.

Universal SEL is not just about programs. Since SEL takes place within the whole classroom group and in most instances is facilitated by the classroom teacher, the classroom climate itself becomes an integral part of the social and emotional learning process. Within an integrated taught (curricular) and caught (classroom climate) approach, students have the opportunity to observe the competences being practiced by teacher/s and peers, and apply these competences themselves in their learning and social activities, supported and reinforced by the classroom teacher. SEL thus becomes an integral aspect of daily life in the classroom. Moreover, sense of safety, sense of belonging, collaboration, inclusion and support for all students in the classroom, provide an optimal learning environment for both academic and social and emotional learning (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang et al, 2020). In their systematic review of studies, Wang et al found that the classroom climate was positively related with social competence, motivation, engagement, and academic achievement, and negatively related

with internalizing and externalizing behaviors. The impact of the classroom climate on motivation and engagement was stronger in classrooms with more ethnic minority students.

A whole school, multi-tiered approach for marginalized and vulnerable children

Some studies have found that universal interventions for vulnerable and marginalized students are *more* effective than interventions which target only these children (e.g., Farahmand et al's 2011 systematic review on SEL programs for low income, urban young people). This raises the question of whether there is a place for SEL-targeted interventions with vulnerable marginalized children, such as interventions tailored specifically to the needs of students considered at risk (selective interventions) or students with more complex social and emotional needs (indicated interventions). Whilst universal SEL for all children, including vulnerable and marginalized ones, remains the intervention of choice within a whole school approach to SEL, additional, more intensive, interventions may be needed to address the diverse and complex needs of students at risk or in difficulty (Cefai et al, 2018; Weare and Nind, 2011). Research indicates that integrated, universal–targeted interventions may be the most effective approach for marginalized students or those experiencing social and emotional difficulties (Murano et al, 2020; Stockings et al, 2016; Werner Seidler et al, 2017; Weare and Nind, 2011). In their meta-analysis of reviews, Weare and Nind (2011) reported that while universal approaches provide a more effective environment for working with students experiencing difficulties than targeted approaches alone, universal approaches on their own are not as effective for such students as those that also include a targeted component. In a review of universal and targeted school-based interventions to prevent depression and anxiety amongst young people, Werner Seidler et al. (2017) found that both universal and targeted interventions were effective in preventing depression

and anxiety. They suggest an integrated, staged approach, with universal interventions followed by targeted interventions for students at risk or experiencing difficulties.

Furthermore, an integrated universal–targeted approach will have maximum reach and thus be more likely to be effective, particularly in the case of vulnerable and marginalized children and families who may not have equal access to universal programs and services (Corrieri et al, 2014). In this way, integrated, school-based SEL interventions can help to overcome disparities in accessibility to programs and services.

An integrated universal-targeted interventions approach

Within a systemic, integrated approach to SEL, all schoolchildren will be provided with an SEL curriculum as part of their formal education from early years to high school. They will have the opportunity to develop such competences as nurturing a positive self-concept, identifying and making use of their strengths, expressing and regulating emotions, coping with challenges, stress and adversity, being empathic and understanding, appreciating diversity, caring for themselves, others and the environment, building healthy relationships, working with others as part of a team, and resolving conflict constructively. The curriculum seeks to address the diverse needs of the learners in the group within an inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms, with activities tailored according to the individual needs of the learners. Some universal programs also include activities that are specifically addressed to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized children such as discrimination, exclusion, bullying, change, loss, and adversity (see proportionate universality below). On the other hand, some programs focus exclusively on challenges and difficulties of substance use, aggression, bullying and victimisation, depression and anxiety (selective interventions). Such focused interventions complement the universal interventions that learners are already exposed to and may be organized as preventive interventions for children at risk, such as those from low SES or migrant backgrounds, children with disability, and children exposed to abuse and violence. Finally a number of children may have more complex and chronic social and emotional needs that manifest in emotional, behavioral and mental health needs (indicated interventions). Indicated interventions are more personalized and intensive and may involve various professionals besides school staff. They also make use of other therapeutic strategies besides SEL, such as cognitive behavior therapy and other psycho-social approaches. A multi-tiered approach thus provides social and emotional education and support according to need within the school system in collaboration with other systems such as parents, local community and professionals (Cefai et al, 2018).

Targeted interventions, however, need to be implemented in a way that do not result in exclusion, labelling or stigma. Being part of a systemic, whole school approach to SEL, focusing on strengths rather than deficits, with interventions facilitated where possible by school staff in contrast to medicalized interventions by external clinicians, and with school-based targeted interventions seen as part of a continuum of support for all students as necessary, help to avoid vulnerable and marginalized children becoming excluded from their peers or labelled as children with deficits in their social and emotional development. School-based targeted interventions ensure that children and families will have access to these services, that the children and families will more likely attend the intervention, and that there will be less likelihood of labelling and stigma (Sanchez et al, 2018). Another approach to make SEL intervention for marginalized children more inclusive and less stigmatising is what Boivin and Hertzman (2012) call ‘proportional universality’. Whilst SEL activities are organized within a universal approach for all children in the group, their dosage and intensity are proportionate to the degree of disadvantage or marginalization in a particular context. Universal intervention strategies are thus tailored to reach children across diverse backgrounds and to

address the specific barriers to access that some children and young people may experience.

RESCUR Surfing the Waves (Cefai et al, 2015) is an example of a proportionate universality curriculum for primary school students. It aims at developing children's competence in building healthy relationships, developing a growth mindset, developing self-determination, building on strengths, and turning challenges into opportunities. Activities are delivered by classroom teachers for all students, but the program is particularly focused on the needs of children from an ethnic background, low socio-economic status and children with disability. There are some indications that the program is particularly effective with children at risk or with social and emotional and mental health needs (Simoes et al, 2020). Further research is needed, however, to determine more accurately how the effect of SEL universal interventions is moderated by such factors as gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability (Rowe and Trickett, 2018).

Case study: SEL in the Maltese educational context

In the Maltese educational context, universal SEL is a mandatory content area of the formal curriculum. Personal, Social and Careers Development (PSCD) seeks to equip schoolchildren with such intra- and interpersonal competences as self-awareness, self-expression, responsible decision making, critical thinking, conflict resolution, dealing with peer pressure, respect for others, healthy relationships, and respect for diversity. Some of these competences are also embedded in other content areas of the curriculum such as Citizenship, Visual and Performing Arts, Ethics/Religious Education, Physical Education, and Circle Time (Cefai, 2020). The Maltese educational system is primarily an inclusive one, with the vast majority of schoolchildren attending mainstream schools and provided with additional support as required. Vulnerable and marginalized children such as children with learning difficulties and challenging behavior, children with disability and children from a migrant background, thus follow the universal SEL curriculum (PSCD) with their peers. Since PSCD sessions take place in groups of not more than 15 students, this makes it more possible for the classroom teacher to address the diverse needs of all students, including those who are vulnerable and marginalized, within a universal design framework. Furthermore, students with individual educational needs such as learning, linguistic and behavior challenges, may be supported by a learning support educator who facilitates their active participation in the sessions. When the social and emotional needs of the students are more pronounced and complex, mainstream schools provide additional targeted support in small groups such as nurture classes (primary schools) and learning support zones (secondary schools). In these contexts, students are provided with more intensive and individualized support in one or two sessions per week, including positive self-esteem, anger management, emotional regulation, problem-solving, resilience-building, empathy, making friends, and working collaboratively with others. Staff at these provisions also work with the classroom teachers and parents for continuity of support in the mainstream classrooms and families respectively. Some of these students may also receive more intensive and specialized support on a one to one basis such as counselling and psychological support from the schools' psychosocial support team.

Conclusion

Universal SEL intervention for all schoolchildren, tailored according to the needs of children in particular contexts and with different needs, represents an effective approach for the promotion of positive development and the prevention of social, emotional and behavior difficulties. It provides vulnerable and marginalized children and young people with the psychological resources to overcome challenges and adversity whilst preventing the development of social, emotional and behavior difficulties. It also serves as a driver for a positive

developmental trajectory, thus operating as an early intervention, resilience-enhancing, and equity-promoting process. Universal intervention however, is more than just stand-alone programs or interventions. It needs to be implemented within a whole school approach to SEL, comprising instructional, curricular, contextual and organizational processes both in the classroom and at the whole school level, and including the whole school community, namely students, school staff, parents and the local community. It also forms part of an integrated approach that is both universal *and* targeted, with a provision of support catering for the diversity of the students' needs. In this way, universal and targeted interventions complement and support each other.

Finally, a word of caution. The focus of this chapter on developing the social and emotional resources of students needs to be seen within a wider systemic approach to the education and positive development of vulnerable and marginalized children. A highly individualized SEL approach may place the onus of responsibility on the victims themselves to overcome disadvantage and disparity, without addressing the structural deficits of unjust systems. A systemic approach to child development and wellbeing underlines the need for adequate structures and systems to be in place, which prevent poverty, social exclusion and other sources of vulnerability and marginalization and promote the positive development and wellbeing of all children.

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Developing tools to increase understanding of PSS-SEL and coordination among stakeholders in education in emergency settings

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ABSTRACT

INEE's PSS-SEL Collaborative and Harvard's EASEL Lab are working together in a partnership designed to explore current approaches to psychosocial support (PSS) and social emotional learning (SEL) in education in emergencies (EIE) contexts. The goal of the partnership is to produce an online, interactive PSS-SEL Toolbox with resources that increase understanding and coordination in the field. The Toolbox includes information from 70 PSS-SEL frameworks and other guiding documents developed and used in global EIE settings, including the specific SEL skills and features of wellbeing. The tools identify points of alignment as well as differences in the priorities and approaches used across regions, age groups, and contexts. The Toolbox includes Data Tools that enable stakeholders to explore and compare the different PSS-SEL approaches, as well as Localizing Tools that support stakeholders to gather local input and use the data to inform work in their own context.

The Toolbox is being developed through an iterative process with members of the INEE PSS-SEL Collaborative and other stakeholders in EIE settings around the world. In this paper, we describe the motivation for the project and initial outcomes, including: current challenges in the field and how our project aims to address them, our process and partners, initial feedback and lessons learned from global EIE stakeholders, a description of the preliminary tools, and plans for field testing in 16 sites.

Développer des outils pour améliorer la compréhension du PSS-SEL et la coordination entre les parties prenantes de l'éducation en situations d'urgence

La collaboration PSS-SEL de l'INEE et le EASEL Lab de Harvard travaillent ensemble dans le cadre d'un partenariat conçu pour explorer les approches actuelles du soutien psychosocial (PSS) et de l'apprentissage socio-émotionnel (ASE) dans les contextes d'éducation en situation d'urgence (EIE). L'objectif du partenariat est de produire une boîte à outils PSS-SEL interactive en ligne avec des ressources qui améliorent la compréhension et la coordination sur le terrain. La boîte à outils comprend des informations provenant de 70 cadres PSS-SEL et d'autres documents d'orientation élaborés et utilisés dans des contextes globaux d'EIE, y compris les compétences SEL spécifiques et les caractéristiques du bien-être. Les outils identifient les points d'alignement ainsi que les différences dans les priorités et les approches utilisées dans les régions, les groupes d'âge et les contextes. La boîte à outils comprend des outils des données qui permettent aux parties prenantes d'explorer et de comparer

les différentes approches PSS-SEL, ainsi que des outils de localisation qui aident les parties prenantes à recueillir des informations locales et à utiliser les données pour informer le travail dans leur propre contexte.

La boîte à outils est développée à travers un processus itératif avec les membres de la collaboration PSS-SEL de l'INEE et d'autres parties prenantes dans des contextes EIE à travers le monde. Dans cet article, nous décrivons la motivation du projet et les résultats initiaux, y compris : les défis actuels sur le terrain et la manière dont notre projet vise à les relever, notre processus et nos partenaires, les premiers retours et les leçons apprises des parties prenantes de l'EIE, une description des outils préliminaires, et les plans pour les tests sur le terrain dans 16 sites.

Desarrollo de herramientas para aumentar la comprensión del PSS-SEL y la coordinación entre grupos de interés en la educación en situaciones de emergencia

La Colaboración PSS-SEL de la INEE y el Laboratorio EASEL de Harvard están trabajando juntos en una colaboración diseñada para explorar los enfoques del apoyo psicosocial (PSS, por sus siglas en inglés) y el aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés) en contextos de educación en emergencias (EeE). El objetivo de la colaboración es generar un conjunto de herramientas interactivas y en línea de PSS-SEL con recursos que aumenten la comprensión y coordinación en el campo. Las herramientas incluyen información de 70 marcos PSS-SEL y otros documentos de orientación desarrollados y utilizados en contextos globales de EeE, incluyendo habilidades específicas de SEL y características de bienestar. Las herramientas identifican los puntos de alineación, así como las diferencias en las prioridades y los enfoques utilizados en las distintas regiones, grupos de edad y contextos. Las herramientas incluyen Herramientas de Datos que permiten a los grupos de interés explorar y comparar los diferentes enfoques de PSS-SEL,

así como Herramientas de Localización que ayudan a los grupos de interés a recolectar información local y utilizar los datos para informar el trabajo en su propio contexto.

El conjunto de herramientas se está desarrollando a través de un proceso iterativo con los miembros de la Colaboración PSS-SEL de la INEE y otras partes interesadas en contextos de EeE de todo el mundo. En este documento, describimos la motivación del proyecto y los resultados iniciales, incluyendo: los desafíos actuales en el campo y cómo nuestro proyecto pretende abordarlos, nuestro proceso y socios, la retroalimentación inicial y las lecciones aprendidas por las partes interesadas globales de EeE, una descripción de las herramientas preliminares, y los planes para las pruebas de campo en 16 sitios.

Introduction

The Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open, global network of practitioners, academics, researchers, policy makers, teachers, and donors who work together to ensure that all individuals living in emergency and crisis contexts can actualize their right to a quality, safe, relevant, and equitable education. Over the past two decades, INEE has played a unique role in elevating the field of education in emergencies (EiE) at the global stage, addressing both funding and policy gaps and advocating for quality programming through collaborative network spaces. Since 2014, INEE has been working to clarify the role and importance of psychosocial support (PSS) and social and emotional learning (SEL) for the EiE sector, through its PSS-SEL Collaborative. By bringing together experts to address the psychosocial, social, and emotional wellbeing needs of children, teachers and communities, the Collaborative serves as a thought leader and has developed several seminal resources widely used in the EiE field.

INEE's PSS-SEL Collaborative and Harvard's EASEL Lab are working together in a multi-year partnership designed to explore current approaches to PSS and SEL within EiE settings. The

primary goal of this partnership is to produce a set of tools and resources that support coherence and coordination in the field, and ultimately improve the sector's ability to develop, implement, and understand the effectiveness of PSS-SEL initiatives in the world's most vulnerable communities. A secondary goal is to support contextualization of PSS-SEL frameworks and other materials in local EIE settings. In order to develop these resources, we are working closely with INGOs, NNGOs, multi-lateral agencies, donors, researchers, and government officials from global EIE settings to inform the goals, outcomes, and processes of our work.

1 Current challenges and our approach

The field of PSS-SEL in EiE currently faces several challenges. First, there are many different PSS-SEL frameworks, with many different names, definitions, and measurement strategies to refer to specific skills. Sometimes, organizations use the same name for different skills, and sometimes they use different names for skills that are similar or overlapping. This makes it difficult to understand evidence tied to specific PSS-SEL skills, to communicate effectively across organizations or partners about existing needs, and to design programs that promote specific PSS and SEL competencies. It also makes it difficult to identify measurement gaps and develop measurement strategies that are aligned to specific skills or outcomes of interest, and to develop indicators to track progress. In short, the lack of coherence negatively affects the ability of EIE stakeholders to promote, measure, and track progress of PSS-SEL efforts, which undermines the field as a whole.

Second, despite the fact that culture and context play a major role in children's social and emotional development and wellbeing, the majority of research on PSS and SEL comes from the US and other Western, stable contexts that reflect dominant white, Western cultural norms. As a result, many PSS-SEL frameworks, programmatic materials, and measurement tools may not be culturally appropriate or targeted to the specific needs, norms, or values of the communities where they are being used. The field needs to value and prioritize locally-led research and programmatic efforts in order to shift the center of knowledge-production towards the South[1]. This will improve how we understand contextual needs and cultural variation of PSS-SEL and support stakeholders in designing and promoting efforts that are meaningful, culturally appropriate, and locally relevant for EIE settings.

To address these challenges, we are creating and field testing a PSS-SEL Toolbox that promotes alignment and coordination in the field by supporting users to do different things, including:

- Gain insights about PSS-SEL approaches developed and used across different settings, including low-resource, crisis-affected, and humanitarian contexts
- Compare PSS-SEL frameworks currently used in EIE and other contexts, by identifying the extent to which each framework includes specific SEL skills and contextual factors that influence wellbeing
- Develop, refine, and adapt PSS-SEL frameworks, programs, or other materials to reflect local values and priorities, while promoting transparency and coordination across actors and settings
- Engage in localizing processes to ensure PSS-SEL efforts are culturally relevant and responsive to local needs

Specifically, the Toolbox (Figure 1) enables users to look inside and across current frameworks and other materials that are used to guide PSS-SEL programming in global EIE contexts. The Toolbox includes a set of online, interactive Data Tools that explore how 70 different PSS-SEL frameworks emphasize specific skills and contextual factors that influence children's wellbeing. The tools enable users to find points of alignment between two different

1 We use 'south' not as a strict geographical term, but in the context of Boaventura de Sousa Santos' work (2015) referring to the marginalized knowledge and wisdom of the global South and the imperative to recover the epistemological diversity of the world.

frameworks, to search for skills or frameworks used in specific contexts, and to identify current patterns in the field. To help users navigate the large amount of information, supports like a decision tree, a framework fit checklist, and a set of filters help the user engage with the tools on the website, and select tools or information that are especially relevant to their goals. The Toolbox also includes Localizing Tools that help stakeholders gather local input and inform the contextualization of PSS-SEL materials, and in the future will include additional resources that are currently under development, such as case studies documenting how different organizations have used these tools to advance their own work.

2 Project process and partners

To create the PSS-SEL Toolbox, we are engaged in a collaborative process that involves the following steps: (a) desk research, (b) outreach to INEE members and the formation of a Project Reference Group, (c) coding and analysis of PSS-SEL frameworks, (d) convening a series of Think Tanks with diverse EIE stakeholders, (e) the development of tools, and (f) field testing in 16 EIE settings around the world. Below, we describe each of these steps and the partners involved. Many of these steps are iterative and inform each other in an ongoing way.

Desk research involved a review of existing PSS-SEL frameworks used in global education settings. Our goal was to identify frameworks and other guidance documents that were developed in, used in, or specifically designed for use in crisis-affected contexts. Prior research has indicated that many international and EIE settings use frameworks, curricula, and measurement and assessment tools that were developed in Western and stable contexts (e.g., Jones et al, 2020) and therefore may not be focused on the unique circumstances and needs affecting communities facing conflict, natural disaster, displacement, or public health crises. Our initial desk research identified only a small number of PSS-SEL frameworks designed within or specifically for

humanitarian and crisis-affected contexts. However, targeted outreach generated a large number of materials currently being used by global EIE stakeholders.

Outreach happened through the INEE PSS-SEL Collaborative and the Project Reference Group. INEE's PSS-SEL Collaborative convened a Reference Group with 26 experts in the field of PSS-SEL, including individuals with expertise in education, child and youth development, SEL programming, and mental health. The Reference Group includes representatives from the following institutions: Aulas en Paz, Colombia; Creative Associates, USA; DAI, Honduras; Engender Health, Ethiopia; Global Education Cluster, Switzerland; Global MHPSS Network, Sri Lanka; International Rescue Committee (IRC), USA; Justice Rising, Democratic Republic of Congo; LEGO Foundation, Denmark; MHPSS Collaborative, USA; Norwegian Refugee Council, Jordan; NYU Global TIES for Children, USA; Plan International, France; Plan International, Nigeria; Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), South Africa; Right To Play, Canada; Save the Children, USA; Sesame Workshop, USA; St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS), Egypt; United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Switzerland; United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Jordan; University of Melbourne, Australia; University of Notre Dame's Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child, USA; USAID Center for Education, USA; and War Child Holland, Uganda.

In addition to providing guidance and feedback throughout the project's design phase, the Reference Group leveraged their networks to identify a wide range of documents used by PSS-SEL practitioners in EIE settings. A total of 70 documents were sourced through desk research and outreach efforts. We included traditional frameworks as well as other documents used to guide policy, implementation, and evaluation of PSS-SEL efforts, including national standards, teaching and learning materials, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and more. We included materials based on overall coverage, codability, and relevance to EIE. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Representative of a wide range of disciplines (e.g., social emotional learning, psychosocial support and mental health, workforce development, character education, life skills education, 21st century skills, peace education)
- Developed and/or used in humanitarian or conflict and crisis settings
- Includes specific skills, competencies, strengths, mindsets, attitudes, values and/or features of the context that are defined and can be coded (i.e., must provide descriptions, details, or examples of skills/features)

Each document was coded by a team of trained researchers using a coding system developed by the EASEL Lab. The coding system is based on a review of the developmental and prevention science literatures and has been refined through multiple projects over the past twelve years (e.g., Jones et al, 2017, Jones et al, 2020). The coding system has three parts and is designed to identify the PSS-SEL skills, competencies, or features of the context that are included in a document. Part one of the coding system is organized around six broad domains of development: cognitive, social, emotion, values, perspectives, and identity. Each domain contains multiple sub-domains (e.g., within the cognitive domain are attention control, working memory, cognitive flexibility, and others) and a series of codes that represent specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors associated with that sub-domain. Part two of the coding system includes five features of children's background, environment, and experiences that impact their development and wellbeing, including ecology, equity, health, safety, and adult support. Each of these features contains a set of dimensions that represent specific examples (e.g., physical, mental, sexual, or reproductive health). Part three is a classification system designed to document and categorize key information about each framework, such as type of organization, age groups targeted, country of development, country of use, and emergency status. Coding and analysis enabled us to describe the PSS-SEL approaches currently used in EiE settings with transparency and detail. By

applying a common set of codes to materials that often use different terminology, we can compare the PSS-SEL terms and definitions in different approaches, determine how terms are related across frameworks, and identify synergies, areas of emphasis, and broad patterns or gaps in the field. Using the results of our coding, we created a website with a set of interactive tools that enable users to explore the PSS-SEL frameworks in a variety of ways.

In fall 2020, the project team hosted Think Tank sessions with practitioners and field staff, ministry of education officials, technical advisors, researchers, donors, and other stakeholders working in global EiE settings. The purpose of the Think Tank was to share project objectives and to seek input from stakeholders. Think Tank sessions were held virtually in October and November 2020, and 72 participants joined from 29 countries. Participant input was used to revise the approach and specific outputs of the project, to better meet the needs of the field. In spring 2021, we hosted a second round of Think Tank sessions with the same group of global EiE stakeholders. The purpose was to share progress and introduce the draft Toolbox through live demonstrations and small group feedback sessions. Think Tank sessions were held virtually in April 2021 and 60 participants joined from 24 countries. Through these sessions, the project team facilitated 16 small group, interactive discussions and collected data through pre- and post-surveys to understand the clarity, usability, and relevance of the tools. This feedback will shape ongoing revisions to the Toolbox and the design of additional resources.

3 Feedback from EIE stakeholders

Stakeholder input has shaped project activities in significant ways. During Think Tanks in the fall 2020, we presented information and participants gave targeted feedback on the following four areas: (a) project objectives, (b) project framing and communication, (c) proposed methods for field testing, and (d) key activities, deliverables, and outputs. We received constructive feedback

from participants, and we used this feedback to revise our approach and to ensure we were responding to the needs in the field.

Related to project objectives, we received consistent feedback that the project should provide tools to enable alignment and coherence, without imposing one particular (or a universal) framework. This led to an important shift in our plans. We had initially intended to develop a 'core adaptive framework' with tools for localization for PSS-SEL in EIE settings, but based on feedback, we shifted gears to instead create a Toolbox that enables stakeholders to compare and identify connections between existing frameworks. Rather than create and disseminate one framework for use across diverse global settings – each with their own needs, histories, and community experiences – participants emphasized that the tools should account for cultural differences and enable users to explore PSS-SEL approaches by context. Because of biases and limitations within the existing PSS-SEL evidence-base and available materials, the tools should support users to explore and adapt materials to reflect local culture and values, as needed.

In terms of project framing and communication, participants indicated the need to be clear that the tools provide *descriptive* information about existing PSS-SEL approaches, and are not meant to be *prescriptive*. For this reason, we emphasize that: (1) the role of the Toolbox is to provide information about PSS-SEL approaches so that stakeholders can evaluate them based on their own locally-defined goals, needs, values, and interests; (2) our coding, analysis, and online tools enable stakeholders to see detailed information and make connections between existing approaches, but do not provide information about the effectiveness of specific frameworks or their validity in specific contexts or populations; (3) more research is needed in EIE contexts to make prescriptive claims about what organizations or ministries of education should target in their setting; and (4) the outputs of the project are not intended to duplicate previous efforts or replace existing frameworks, but to serve as a 'reading tool' to help stakeholders identify and understand similarities and differences between existing PSS-SEL materials.

For field testing, participants emphasized that cross-sectoral and interagency collaboration is necessary to respond to the complex realities of each EIE setting. Stakeholders said that field testing should be a process that allows for meaningful community input and shows how using the Toolbox can meet the needs of the local crisis context. We also heard a demand for using participatory methods to encourage community ownership and to raise up community voices and local expertise – to balance the fact that many frameworks and decisions about programming do not reflect field-level knowledge about local needs and realities. The tools were therefore designed to encourage the inclusion of a variety of stakeholders, and the flexibility of the tools ultimately allows the user to interpret who constitutes their community of interest (for example, university professors, refugee teachers, host community parents) and the best way to include community members to meet their goals. Finally, stakeholders expressed concern that without sufficient funding and resources, many interested sites would be unable to participate in field testing. This was driven by concerns around equity, as many smaller organizations and local NGOs may not have capacity to invest staff time for planning and carrying out field testing activities. This could lead to the unintended consequence that project findings would represent the views of larger, well-funded, and often western-led humanitarian agencies, instead of locally-led and community-based organizations. Participants named language barriers, lack of reliable internet access, and the additional burdens of responding to the COVID-19 crisis as critical issues impacting many local organizations. This resulted in a restructuring of the field-testing process, including more flexible options for participation, use of project funds for translation into additional local languages, and plans for more robust and flexible technical assistance throughout the field-testing phase.

Related to project activities and outputs, participants expressed interest in collecting and sharing lessons learned from across different field-testing sites. Many participants said that qualitative

research from field testing should be used to help generate new codes and the inclusion of locally-defined PSS-SEL terms and concepts. Participants also recommended adding filters to the tools, so information can be viewed according to selected criteria such as context, age, language, region, etc. Participants were asked to share priorities for the Toolbox based on their own work, and the need for 'a common language' and localizing tools were key themes. For example, participants asked for: 'tools to support the contextualization process,' 'guidance for contextualization,' 'a glossary of terms in plain language that make it clear what we mean by PSS-SEL,' 'an inventory of PSS-SEL dimensions so stakeholders can choose what they value and want to focus on,' and 'the opportunity to validate the codes by understanding local definitions of SEL.' These themes emphasize both the current challenges and highlight ongoing needs for the field.

4 Building a toolbox for PSS-SEL in EiE settings

In response to stakeholder input, we created a set of tools to support alignment and coordination, along with tools for incorporating local voices and raising up local sources of knowledge about PSS-SEL in EIE settings. The PSS-SEL Toolbox is a free, online resource with a variety of tools to meet the interests and needs of different EIE stakeholders. The Toolbox is intended to be used by researchers, program developers, technical advisors, monitoring and evaluation teams, ministry of education officials, NGO staff, donors, and policymakers working to integrate PSS and SEL into education systems and community-based youth programming. The Toolbox currently includes two types of tools, summarized in Figure 1 below.

TOOL TYPE	TOOL NAME	TOOL DESCRIPTION
Data tools	Interactive, online, data-based and visual tools designed to explore the PSS-SEL approaches used in over 50 countries and EiE settings (currently presented in the language of the frameworks and other materials we coded, either English or Spanish)	
	Compare Domains	Bar graphs that show what SEL domains and skills are included in each PSS-SEL framework
	Compare Frameworks	Side-by-side comparisons that show what constructs are related between any two frameworks
	Compare Terms	A searchable diagram that shows where each SEL domain and skill appears across all the frameworks
	Compare Wellbeing	Heat maps that show what features of children's background, environment, and experience are included in each PSS-SEL framework
	Thesaurus	A searchable database of all the terms used in PSS-SEL frameworks, their definitions, and a list of related terms
	Framework Profiles	Information about each PSS-SEL framework, with filters by region, country, developer type, focus, age targeted, and whether it was designed specifically for emergency or fragile contexts
Localizing tools	Localizing processes and contextualization guidance to help stakeholders use the data and gather local input to inform PSS-SEL work in their context (currently available in Arabic, Bengali, Dari, English, French, Pashto, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Swahili)	
	Identify Local Needs and Assets	A bank of questions and a four-step process for engaging local community members to determine the PSS-SEL needs, values, or existing practices in your setting
	Learn About Skills	An inventory and reflection guide to explore 24 skills and 30 dimensions of wellbeing that support positive outcomes for children and youth
	Use the Data	A set of instructions and demo videos for how to use each of the Data Tools to address questions in your local work
	Prioritize for Local Context	A two-part exercise to align local needs with other key inputs in order to determine priorities and next steps in your setting
	Validate for Local Context	General guidance and suggested activities to examine the relevance and fit of PSS-SEL work with input from local community members

Table 1. Description of tools included in the PSS-SEL Toolbox

We are in the process of developing additional resources that provide more information, guidance, and support to help stakeholders navigate the site and learn more about PSS-SEL in EiE. Planned resources include: a decision tree to help users find the tools that address their specific questions, interests, or needs; a summary of current patterns and trends in the field, based on the PSS-SEL approaches coded and analyzed through this project; findings from a recent literature review of PSS-SEL in EIE settings; case studies written by stakeholders who participate in field testing showing how they use the PSS-SEL toolbox to advance their own work in different settings; and links to other resources in the field, such as detailed information about PSS-SEL measurement and assessment tools used in global EIE contexts.

5 What's next: field testing

Field testing and validation will take place in 16 sites across the summer and fall of 2021 (see Figure 2 below). During the summer, Anchor Organizations will participate in a master training and orientation to the Toolbox, and receive technical assistance to plan and lead an in-country workshop using the tools to meet locally-defined objectives. These Anchor Organizations will convene local NGOs, ministry officials, practitioners and/or researchers in their context to try out the tools and identify ways to use the Toolbox to enhance their PSS-SEL work. Feedback will be collected through a survey and a series of semi-structured focus group discussions. The purposes of field testing are to: (1) introduce stakeholders to the PSS-SEL Toolbox, (2) gather feedback about the clarity, usability, and relevance of the tools, (3) collect data on local PSS-SEL needs and values to better understand the skills that are most relevant for children and youth across diverse EiE settings, and (4) document the process and lessons learned from using the Toolbox to meet local needs.

The project team will analyze field testing data and use it to inform revisions to the content and design of the Toolbox, as well

REGION	ANCHOR ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY OR LOCATION
Africa	Humanity for All Foundation	Uganda
	Family Health International (FHI360)	Democratic Republic of Congo: North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri Provinces
	Education Development Center (EDC)	Democratic Republic of Congo
	Youth Education and Sports (YES)	Kenya: Turkana County, Kakuma
	Creative Associates International	Somalia
Asia	Save the Children	Bangladesh: Cox's Bazaar Region
	Larled Education Research and Consulting	Afghanistan
	Education Development Center (EDC)	The Philippines
Europe	University of Patras	Greece
Latin America	National Autonomous University of Mexico, and AtentaMente	Mexico
	Juarez and Associates	Guatemala
	Secretaria Municipal de Educação de Manaus	Brazil: Amazonas State
	Aulas en Paz	Colombia
Middle East	World Learning, and Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)	Lebanon
	Amal Alliance	Lebanon and other locations
Global	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Global: mapping PSS-SEL measurement tools to the inventory in the PSS-SEL Toolbox

Table 2: Field testing sites by region

as to shape the development of new tools to support the needs of local EIE settings. We will share the updated Toolbox with Anchor Organizations through a validation workshop and then release the website as a free and open global public good. Finally, field testing sites will help to design and co-lead a Lessons Learned Workshop, hosted by INEE, in which representatives from each Anchor Organization share their process and describe the impacts of their work. By sharing processes and lessons learned, we hope to support other EIE stakeholders to use the tools to meet their needs and improve the sector's ability to carry out high-quality PSS-SEL work in the world's most complex and vulnerable settings.

6 Final thoughts

As more education systems and organizations seek to integrate PSS-SEL into their work, the field needs tools to coordinate and communicate across diverse approaches, while also promoting local research to inform the shape of frameworks, programs, and assessment tools that are culturally-relevant and responsive to local needs. This is particularly true in crisis-affected and humanitarian settings, where rigorous PSS-SEL research has been limited and often relies on evidence and materials generated in contexts that are very different from the communities where materials are being used.

In collaboration with global EIE stakeholders, we hope the PSS-SEL Toolbox will enable users to explore existing approaches and to identify and adapt frameworks to meet local needs and move their work forward. By helping EIE stakeholders engage in these activities, we hope the Toolbox can also lay the foundation for other important tasks, which we believe are critical to improving the overall quality of PSS-SEL in education in emergency settings, including: the articulation of research and programmatic objectives for PSS-SEL work, to reflect local community needs, experiences, and realities; the development of indicators to track progress in the field in meaningful and locally-relevant ways; the identification of core competencies and/or evidence gaps for PSS-SEL across different contexts, including EiE settings; and the development of PSS-SEL measurement maps that help to identify measurement gaps and design new tools to assess PSS-SEL skills in different settings, including EiE.

Ultimately, the PSS-SEL Toolbox presents an opportunity for all users, including those in EiE and non-EiE contexts, to build their knowledge of global and local PSS-SEL approaches that can provide lessons and applications for a variety of settings, think critically about contextualization objectives and processes so that PSS-SEL initiatives better serve diverse communities, and promote transparency, understanding, communication, coordination, and collaboration across the wider field of PSS-SEL.

Note: The authors wish to acknowledge that despite our goal of working against the coloniality of knowledge situated in the global North, we are products of a system that prioritizes certain ways of thinking and our language and tone may reflect these habituated patterns. We are in the process of developing greater critical awareness and capacity for de-centering Northern ways of thinking. We appreciate opportunities to reflect on our own biases and how they show up in our work, and we welcome feedback.

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Home page

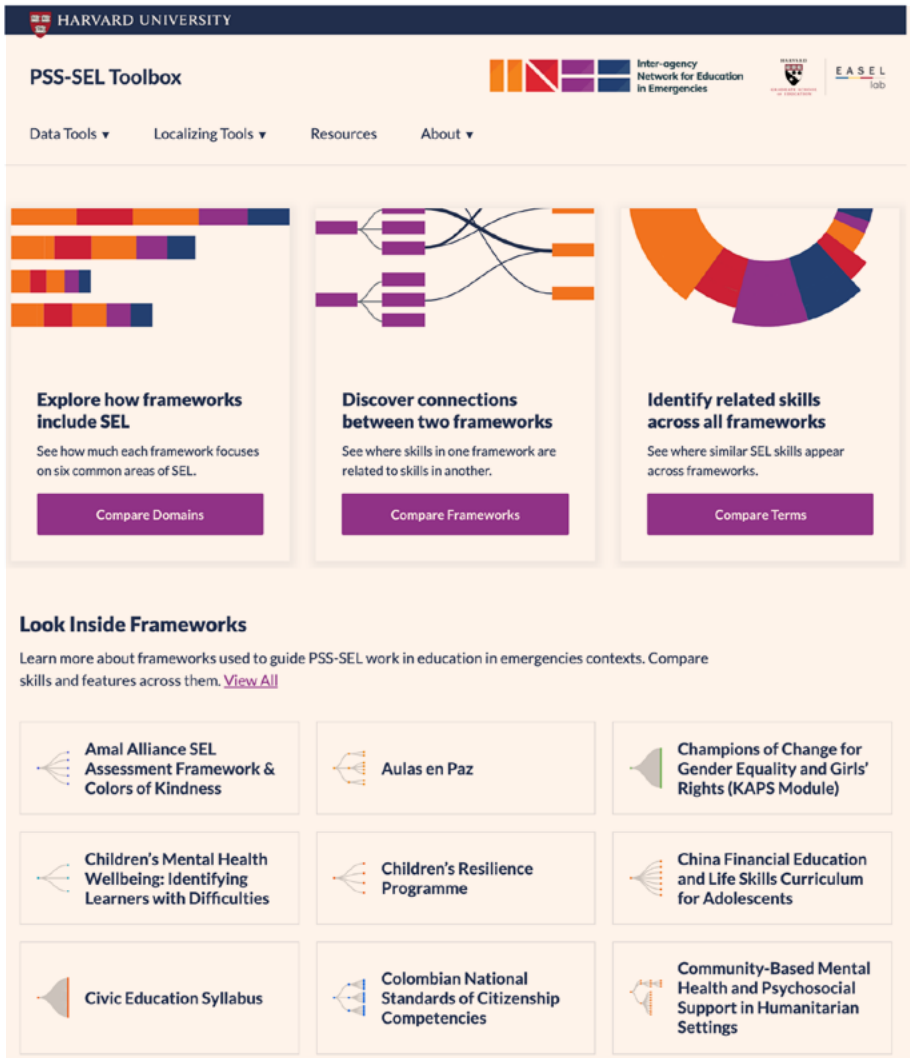
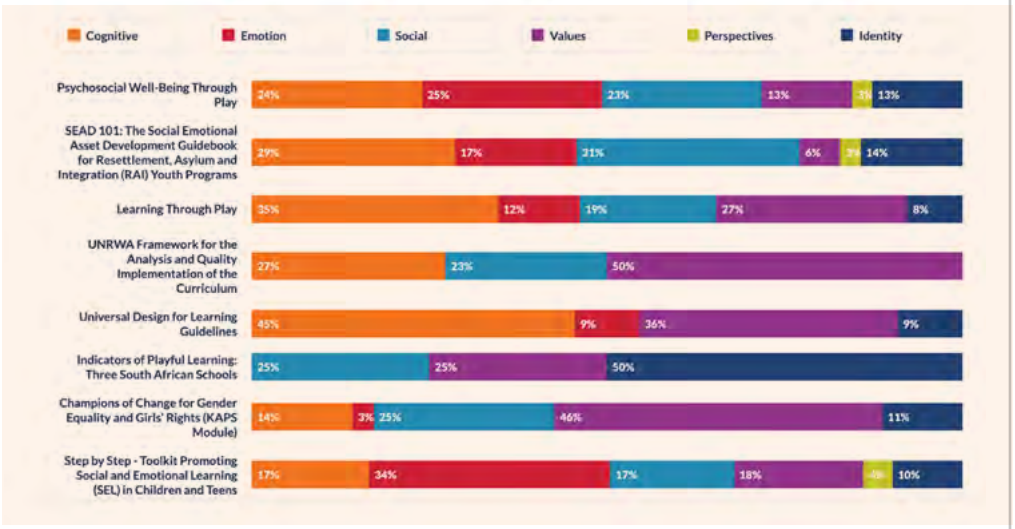


Figure 1. Sample screenshots and visuals from Toolbox

Compare Domains tool



Compare Domains tool

Thesaurus tool:

Figure 1. Sample screenshots and visuals from Toolbox (continued)

13

Learning about learning: A transformative vision for sustainable educational outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Since 1994, driven by its vision to make learning accessible to all children, Ana Aqra Association has been responding to increasing educational needs in Lebanon through its continuous learning process for sustainable educational outcomes. The Association ensured clear and open collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), which resulted in an endorsed and codified approach, the Quality Teaching and Learning model. The model was developed by Ana Aqra Association to improve students' learning outcomes and psychological well-being. Based on a belief that teaching children how to learn and making learning apparent to them is more important than just delivering content, Ana Aqra's approach includes many elements to reach that goal. For this purpose, Ana Aqra has embedded a psychosocial well-being program in all its educational programs to enable children to learn. This program has evolved further to include social and emotional competencies and parental engagement programs, based on needs and in alignment with MEHE's Psychosocial and Social and Emotional Learning framework. Creating a safe and enabling learning environment is also an important practice, ensured through providing quality resources and through building teachers and parents' capacities. From Ana Aqra's practitioner perspective, meaningful teaching and learning experiences and empowerment of learners to become responsible for their own learning are key to sustainable, lifelong learning.

Apprendre sur l'apprentissage : Une vision transformatrice pour des résultats éducatifs durables

Depuis 1994, orientée par sa vision de rendre l'apprentissage accessible à tout enfant, l'association Ana Aqra répond aux besoins éducatifs accrus du contexte Libanais à travers son processus d'apprentissage continu visant des résultats éducatifs durables.

La collaboration de l'Association Ana Aqra avec le Ministère de l'Education et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (MEHE) a abouti à une approche approuvée et codifiée : le modèle d'enseignement et d'apprentissage de qualité. Le modèle a été développé par l'Association Ana Aqra visant l'amélioration des performances éducatifs des apprenants ainsi que leur état de bien-être. Fondée sur la conviction qu'il est plus important d'enseigner aux apprenants les stratégies d'apprentissage que de leur fournir tout simplement un contenu éducatif, l'approche de l'Association Ana Aqra comprend de nombreux éléments visant à atteindre cet objectif. Dans ce but et afin d'établir les conditions propices aux apprentissages, l'Association Ana Aqra a intégré une composante de bien-être psychosocial dans tous ses programmes éducatifs. Cette composante a évolué pour inclure des compétences sociales et émotionnelles ainsi que des programmes d'engagement parental, développés à partir d'une détection des besoins et alignés avec le cadre d'apprentissage psychosocial et socio- émotionnel du

MEHE. De même, la création d'un environnement d'apprentissage sécurisant et stimulant est une pratique importante assurée par la provision des ressources de qualité ainsi qu'à travers le développement des capacités des enseignants et des parents. D'une perspective de praticien, l'Association Ana Aqra croit que l'efficacité de l'enseignement et l'apprentissage ainsi que l'engagement actif des apprenants dans leur processus d'apprentissages sont essentiels pour un apprentissage significatif et durable.

Aprendiendo sobre aprender: Una visión transformadora para resultados educativos sostenibles

Desde 1994, impulsada por su visión de hacer el aprendizaje accesible a todos los niños y niñas, la Asociación Ana Aqra ha estado respondiendo a las crecientes necesidades educativas del Líbano a través de un proceso de aprendizaje continuo para el logro de resultados educativos sostenibles. La Asociación tuvo una colaboración clara y abierta con el Ministerio de Educación y Enseñanza Superior (MEHE, por sus siglas en inglés) que resultó en un enfoque aprobado y codificado: el modelo de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de Calidad. El modelo fue desarrollado por la Asociación Ana Aqra para mejorar los resultados de aprendizaje y el bienestar psicológico de los y las estudiantes. Basada en la creencia de que enseñar a niños y niñas a aprender y hacer que el aprendizaje sea evidente para ellos es más importante que limitarse a impartir contenidos, el enfoque de Ana Aqra incluye muchos elementos destinados a alcanzar ese objetivo. Para ello, Ana Aqra ha incorporado un programa de bienestar psicosocial en todos sus programas educativos para facilitar que los niños y niñas aprendan. Este programa ha evolucionado e incorporado programas de competencias socioemocionales y de participación parental, identificados en función de las necesidades y en consonancia con el marco de Aprendizaje Psicosocial y Socioemocional del MEHE. La creación de un entorno de aprendizaje seguro y propicio es también una práctica importante, garantizada mediante la provisión de

recursos de calidad y el desarrollo de las capacidades del cuerpo docente y las familias. Desde la perspectiva profesional de Ana Aqra, las experiencias significativas de enseñanza y aprendizaje y el empoderamiento de estudiantes para hacerse responsables de su propio aprendizaje son fundamentales para un aprendizaje sostenible y a lo largo de la vida.

Introduction

Ana Aqra Association (meaning, 'I read') was established in 1994 in response to an alarmingly low percentage of Lebanese who read. Understanding the importance of reading in improving children's social, emotional, and cognitive growth, Ana Aqra started to establish classroom libraries to support the good practice of reading in public elementary schools, which are the main hosts for vulnerable communities. Through various collaborations, Ana Aqra was able to ensure at least one levelled class library and an Arabic language teacher resource kit in every classroom of grades 1–6 in all public elementary schools, contributed to the training and coaching of over 2000 teachers in Lebanon and abroad, and designed a free app to support children learning Arabic as well as providing direct services to children and their families over a period of 26 years, reaching more than 142,210 beneficiaries.

In 2010, a small pilot called 'I also can read' targeted the 32 most struggling learners who were at risk of dropping out due to their insufficient literacy level. The pilot shed light on the real causes hindering their progress. Although literacy instruction is extremely important, we found that unsafe learning environments with teachers who lack pedagogical approaches to motivate vulnerable children to learn and strive, and lack of parental engagement, were the leading factors in children failing to read. Thus, instead of adopting a reading program, Ana Aqra Association (AAA) designed a six-week summer remedial program based on the Balanced Literacy Approach (BLA). The BLA balances explicit language instruction with independent learning and language exploration

and often incorporates a framework including components such as reading aloud, guided reading, shared reading and independent reading, together with phonics and word study. AAA now trains and coaches teachers on how to apply the BLA in a motivational and empowering classroom environment for students, focusing on active and interactive classroom practices, differentiated learning, and lesson planning based on diagnostic and formative assessment. This teaching and learning structure builds on the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Framework, which reinforces a gradual shift of responsibility within the classroom from teacher to students. The workshop structure and GRR are built upon a sound research base and are adapted to fit the context(s) where AAA has implemented its programs in formal and non-formal education. The workshop structure enhances classroom management so that teachers can spend more time on learning instead of fixing behavior. The structure also reinforces a focus on student practice and reflection while allowing for the scaffolding of learning and differentiated approaches, enabling teachers to better respond to the multiple levels and needs of students in the same classroom.

The approach resulted in children admiring their school since it was now equipped with adequate leveled resources, had clean and organized classrooms – making learning accessible and enjoyable – provided a safe environment that supported risk-taking and learning from mistakes, and was transformed into a place where they could come together every morning and share stories, events and concerns. The intervention enhanced children's school retention by improving attendance rate, behavior, and performance, thereby bridging many different educational gaps. This summer program became the basis for the holistic approach that has now been scaled to train all elementary language public school teachers in Lebanon as well as an opportunity for introducing quality to non-formal education programs. These non-formal programs are regulated by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and are usually implemented in community-based centers. They aim to equip learners with the skills needed to transition to formal school.

From the initial pilot and since 2010, a cycle of learning about learning has kept us informed about children's evolving needs, their communities, and their teachers, resulting in the expansion of our programs and enabling us to reach thousands of learners each year and to codify our approaches in manuals that support educators and caregivers within and outside Lebanon.

Driven by our vision of making learning accessible to all children, Ana Aqra has embedded psychosocial well-being within its educational programs and published many different resources to support learning and social emotional growth inside the classroom and at home. Some of these resources are the Quality of Teaching and Learning model, the psychosocial well-being program, as well as social and emotional learning.

Ana Aqra's psychosocial well-being program: three essential premises

Ana Aqra provides a transformative vision for sustainable educational outcomes and empowered youth. The conceptualization of this vision is based on three essential premises: a holistic educational approach (focusing on the different aspects of the individual's development: intellectual, physical, spiritual, social, emotional); a human rights-based approach (recognizing students' right to an equitable education with strong ethical foundation and empowering them with knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to build a culture of human rights in society); and a lifelong learning approach to enhance their understanding of the world and support them to reach their potential (Jarvis, 2006). Accordingly, and drawing on the aforementioned vision, Ana Aqra has adopted three strands as part of the psychosocial well-being program in order to respond to the psychosocial needs of all children within a continuously challenging context of political stress, economic distress and facing a pandemic. The three strands benefit all children and their families as well as educators participating in any or all of

Ana Aqra's intervention programs, including the Community Based Early Childhood Education program, the Basic Literacy and Numeracy program, and the Retention Support program. The three strands are Psychosocial Support (PSS), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and Voices for Humanity.

While our PSS program was developed to support and promote the well-being of vulnerable children affected by displacement and conflict, our SEL program, under the umbrella of PSS, focuses on supporting all learners to acquire knowledge and work on their executive functions, acquiring values, attitudes and competencies that promote their well-being and improve their chances of succeeding in life. We believe that adding the Social and Emotional stands to the well-being program is essential for the lifelong learning of vulnerable Lebanese and refugee children.

Ana Aqra's SEL framework evolved through working with our communities and learners. The main SEL domains and competencies were identified as being critical for creating secure, caring and predictable environments in which children and adolescents can learn, be protected, and develop the skills they need to cope with the occasionally negative effects of their often-challenging life experiences (Elias, 1997).

Working with our vulnerable community, the need for introducing basic SEL competencies was apparent, starting with identifying and expressing emotions and feelings. Due to the impact of stressful life events experienced by our children and communities, which affected their well-being, it was necessary to provide them with tools to manage their emotions and build effective coping mechanisms. These competencies were introduced through stand-alone activities as well as integrated in the curriculum, depending on needs. In addition, the need to support children and their families on issues related to violence, and family and peer relationships, was also noticed. Ana Aqra introduced more topics on social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making skills through activities targeting parents, teachers and children. Modeling positive

Figure 1: Ana Aqra's SEL framework

behavior and communication was encouraged and promoted (Denham, 2010).

In order to develop an effective SEL framework that is suitable for our communities' needs as well as the curriculum, we based it on contextualized effective practices and on different existing SEL frameworks. We focused mainly on the framework of the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), integrating Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision-Making Skills (CASEL, 2003).

Additionally, throughout its educational programs, AAA emphasizes metacognition and the executive functions of the brain as the first competency. Preparing learners to be more aware of their learning process will enable them to transfer and apply knowledge and skills in new situations. This led us to introduce Brain Building/Executive Functions and Cognitive competencies to our SEL framework.

Lastly, Values were introduced to the framework to align with the need for values-based education and the needs of the Lebanese curriculum, where values are perceived as essential under the Civics subject and for social and emotional learning. Ana Aqra's SEL framework is shown in figure 1.

At a later stage, AAA introduced our Voices for Humanity project, which added value to the existing well-being program and supported the healthy development of children by further addressing questions of values and social cohesion.

These three strands, along with an additional component of parental engagement, supported children's social and emotional development and their psychosocial well-being.

Activities developed under PSS and SEL have been lately available as hard copies through manuals, PDF and digital formats on the platform of the Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP) in Lebanon.[1]

Parental engagement programs: a significant contribution to learners' improved well-being

In order to ensure a holistic educational approach and to support the well-being of our learners and their communities, we promoted and ensured the incorporation of strong parental engagement programs across all of AAA's education programs. External evaluation has shown the significant contribution of the programs to learners' psychosocial well-being and learning at large. The parental engagement programs were also tailored to children's and parents' needs and based on the nature of the education program for both formal and non-formal settings. Our aim was to harmonize the psychosocial and social elements of learning which are important for children's academic achievement. Our consistent efforts led to positive results that were tangible to our partners, external evaluators and most importantly the parents/caregivers themselves. One external evaluator stated in their report that 'the Ana Aqra approach has had a positive impact on children's socio-emotional learning and psychosocial well-being, and has resulted in improvements in better parenting, and better educational outcomes, and a safe and secure environment that was conducive to active learning.' Many parents also testified to noticeable improvements, for example: 'Our children became better behaved, more organized, were able to correct their behaviours faster, were more confident and took on a leadership role.' Another parent reported that 'signs of fear, anxiety, distress and phobia had lessened or disappeared altogether since children attended the classes'. Others mentioned improvement in health and hygiene habits: 'Eating and personal hygiene habits also improved.' These outcomes have strengthened trustful relationships between AAA and all other beneficiaries.

Trustful relationships

All of Ana Aqra's educational projects were based on promoting a feeling of belonging, a sense of community and a relationship of trust between beneficiaries and Ana Aqra's staff. Staff working in the field were trained to act responsibly, modeling Ana Aqra's belief in education and the need for accountability and transparency. Effective communication was always necessary, and our accountability process was reinforced by facilitating frequent meetings with the community, ongoing collection of feedback and actions taken to address reported gaps. This frequent and meaningful interaction strengthened us as a community of learners, creating a more cohesive relationship as a group and leading us all to be more empathetic towards each other. Enthusiasm and motivation to keep up the good work was often present due to the close and positive relationship among staff and managers. The psychosocial well-being of our staff is essential and well reflected in the trainings. Self-care materials for teachers were introduced and promoted widely. The well-being of our staff and the enabling safe and inclusive learning environment are highly correlated. Safe referral systems and pathways are an important part of our interventions, leading to more trust between beneficiaries and the organization. Following up on our beneficiaries and outcomes is a frequent practice, not only regarding the quality of the literacy program but also the well-being

1 https://dl.crdp.org/

and safety of beneficiaries. As a result of the positive participatory approach, our interventions have resulted in positive outcomes and impact. With sustainability in mind, Ana Aqra has succeeded in creating trustful relationships with MEHE.

At the level of pedagogy and approach, Ana Aqra introduced a more positive and collaborative relationship between teachers and students in all its educational projects, by ensuring that children are given the opportunity to participate in the learning process, engage in discussions, think critically, and take actions as much as possible.

Ana Aqra's educational approach promotes dialogue and discussions – in particular, during circle time or activities on PSS or SEL. Teachers and students often sit at the same level, communicate positively, attentively and respecting each other's turn and opinion.

This practice has enabled students to feel valued and has created harmony between teachers and students and facilitated classroom management.

Knowing that the Lebanese educational system is still traditional, authoritarian and based on memorization and grades, Ana Aqra has promoted a curriculum where teaching and learning is interactive and child-centered. We were keen to integrating social and emotional competencies across literacy and all other subjects in all our programs, for which teachers required extensive training on positive communication and advanced pedagogical approaches and methodologies. Implementing PSS and SEL in lessons and activities impacted positively on collaboration and relationships between teacher and students and among students themselves.

Moreover, teachers' positive attitudes towards the students included listening to their opinions, appreciating their work, and providing them with safe spaces to think critically. This had a positive effect on students, improving their self-confidence and self-esteem, and enhancing their inquiry, reasoning and social skills. Teachers also became more democratic and appreciative of children's inputs, having witnessed the positive results.

Relationship with MEHE for sustainable impact

Since 1994, Ana Aqra has ensured clear and open collaboration with MEHE. Our continuous consultation with MEHE led to programs that are needs-based and responsive to the most urgent challenges facing public schools and learners. More recently, a strong collaboration has also taken place between AAA and CRDP, which is responsible for the development of curriculum and educational resources in collaboration with all stakeholders in the country. This collaboration and partnership resulted in a fully comprehensive package of digital, accessible online materials that are interactive and engaging for self-paced learning, for learners, teachers and caregivers. The trust between AAA and MEHE has led to many opportunities to map needs and adapt programs to ensure appropriate responses using available resources. The resulting approach, endorsed by the MEHE, CRDP and the Lebanese University's Faculty of Education, is now codified in a handbook called the Quality Teaching and Learning (QTL).

Ana Aqra's approach: making learning accessible to all

The approach is not about content, rather it is about 'how and why'. Learning to learn becomes more important than 'merely' teaching how to read. Reading becomes a tool rather than an end in itself. Proficiency in reading allows children to learn better about anything and everything, from languages to math to knowing about the world around them.

Over the years, AAA has responded to emerging needs through its continuous learning process and project evaluation. To reduce cost and encourage success, AAA has worked hard to attend to the root cause of failure at school. While still providing retention support, AAA designed a preventive program that prepares children to successfully join school at the proper age. The community-based early childhood education program (CBECE)

is designed to target children aged 3–6 who are living in less stimulating environments and have less chance to attend any ECE programs. It ensures that children complete the program and enroll successfully in grade 1. In support of a smooth transition from AAA's CBECE to public school, children are encouraged to enroll in a retention support program during their first two years of elementary school. Meanwhile, the parents of these young children are targeted with the 'I also can teach' program, which enables them – regardless of their own literacy level – to better understand their children's developmental milestones and learning process, to support them with minimal resources recycled from home, and to attend to children under three with activities that will stimulate them and better prepare them to join school later.

Enhancing the home environment as a learning environment came in handy during the pandemic and lockdown: AAA found a real partner in parents who had attended the programs. Through online capacity building and continuous support from our teachers, parents were able to play the role of teachers and proudly support their children's education during the most stressful times. The safe and enabling leaning environment that AAA advocates has built a community of learners who trust each other, who are aware of each other's needs and who respect each other's capacities; a community that collaborates and shares responsibility for solving challenges aiming at enhancing the chances of children to learn in a conducive school and home settings.

But sharing responsibilities and collaborating is not enough. Throughout the years and based on the findings, AAA has become more aware of the needs for appropriate resources to be made available to children and within close reach, whether in classrooms or at home. Knowing that we have to meet each child where she/he is, AAA had to provide books that meet the child's reading ability and interest. Given that children's stories in Arabic were not leveled, Ana Aqra partnered with the Arab Thought Foundation to encourage publishers of Arabic children books to start this practice in the same way that is already available for English and

to a certain extent for French. Consequently, leveled stories in different languages were made available in every classroom AAA intervened in, through different funding sources, whether in non-formal or formal settings. Not depending on school textbooks alone, AAA resources therefore include leveled stories and hands-on, in-house-designed materials including flash cards and board games specifically designed to meet all needs from early childhood education till grade 6. Lately, Ana Aqra has created an app to support teaching and learning of Arabic through play (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.anaaqra.hafilahafila).

Teachers are trained on the Quality Teaching and Learning approach as needed. Training focuses mainly on pillars of the responsive classroom, classroom management, and the gradual release of responsibility to build children's capacities and skills on sharing responsibilities so that they become responsible for their own learning regardless of their level, age or nationality. Teachers are supported with teacher's guides, kits (read aloud stories, cards and board games) and sample lesson plans. Teachers are also supported with coaching sessions provided by expert coaches who are familiar with the approach. The coaches are equipped with a validated classroom observation tool and their coaching is based on reflective practice where thinking aloud about what to teach, how to teach and why to teach make teaching and learning more meaningful. The change we see in teacher practice is a clear shift from teaching the content/book to teaching children how to learn and make learning apparent to them. Our data reflects the impact of this approach on learners' reading levels: out of 727 learners who were enrolled in our non-formal education program in spring 2019, 65% improved their reading skills in Arabic and in English. The learners were assessed using the Early Grade Reading Assessment.

Financial sustainability

In the first 13 years after its inception (1994–2007), and with a vision of 'Making Books Accessible to all Children', Ana Aqra depended

mainly on volunteers, in-kind donations and an annual budget based on donations ranging from $50,000 to $100,000. The focus was on encouraging reading through the provision of classroom libraries in public schools and assigning book-loving volunteers to read in these classrooms. The portfolio of Ana Aqra has now grown to 80 public schools in all regions of the country. Reports gathered by volunteer readers indicate that learners show great interest and excitement during the reading sessions, and a clear relationship of trust has been nurtured with the school staff.

In the early years of AAA, continuing low reading levels necessitated further investigation. Between 2008 and 2011, Ana Aqra therefore took on further responsibilities and started focusing on understanding the barriers faced by children and their families. The programs grew to include retention support programs, which attracted the interest of individual private funders, companies and some international agencies. This resulted in doubling the yearly budget while maintaining the high reliance on volunteers and in kind donations.

Between 2012 and 2019, and with the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis, the need and the opportunity for scaling Ana Aqra's programs became urgent. In parallel, Ana Aqra started working on its sustainability model by growing its professional executive team and expanding its services to include training and product development, nationally and internationally. As expected, Ana Aqra's partners grew to an average of seven partners per year with an annual budget peaking at US$8 million. Funds from training and the sale of products continued to be a small part of total revenue, but nevertheless provided a useful marketing channel. Ana Aqra became a thought leader in education in Lebanon, specifically for public schools and the refugee community.

The economic, financial, political and pandemic crises that coincided in 2020, and which have continued, have led to further evolution of the sustainability strategy, including distance learning, with its different modalities, and homes turned into classrooms with parents/caregivers playing a leading role in engaging their children in learning. The previous challenges of overcrowded classrooms or lack of access to education for a large number of refugee children, may now lead to innovative education pathways. Hence, rethinking solutions to 'Make Learning Accessible to All Children', leveraging the role of parents in maintaining children's engagement in education, and reconsidering a reduced curriculum that links education to the economic growth of the community through clear pathways to opportunities of livelihood and work, may be the way forward to maintain the interest of beneficiaries in education while working towards the well-being of communities.

Reflection

Over the years, Ana Aqra's role and responsibility has grown significantly while its relationship with MEHE and CRDP has evolved from being an organization that promotes the love of reading to a leading partner organization supporting the country's strategy to improve access to and quality of education. Ana Aqra's problem-solving approach contributes to the thinking, designing and execution of many national education programs and continues to be in collaboration with MEHE and CRDP. Furthermore, AAA stays faithful to scale further the endorsed model as well as creating and distributing adequate resources that respond to the needs of teachers, learners and their families. Supporting the communities of learners has had an impact beyond the Lebanese public schools and has benefited some Lebanese private schools and initiatives in countries such as Greece and Mauritania. Ana Aqra's approach and framework have improved the quality of education and made learning more accessible not only through improved teacher practice but also through the provision of appropriate resources and support. The theory of change presented in the following graphic explains how the approach impacts children's education by making teaching and learning child-centered and by providing quality resources, beyond textbooks, to support the individual needs of learners, caregivers, teachers, coaches and trainers. The

collaboration between all stakeholders not only improves the learning environment but signals the importance of maximizing opportunities and engaging stakeholders to keep learning and progressing.

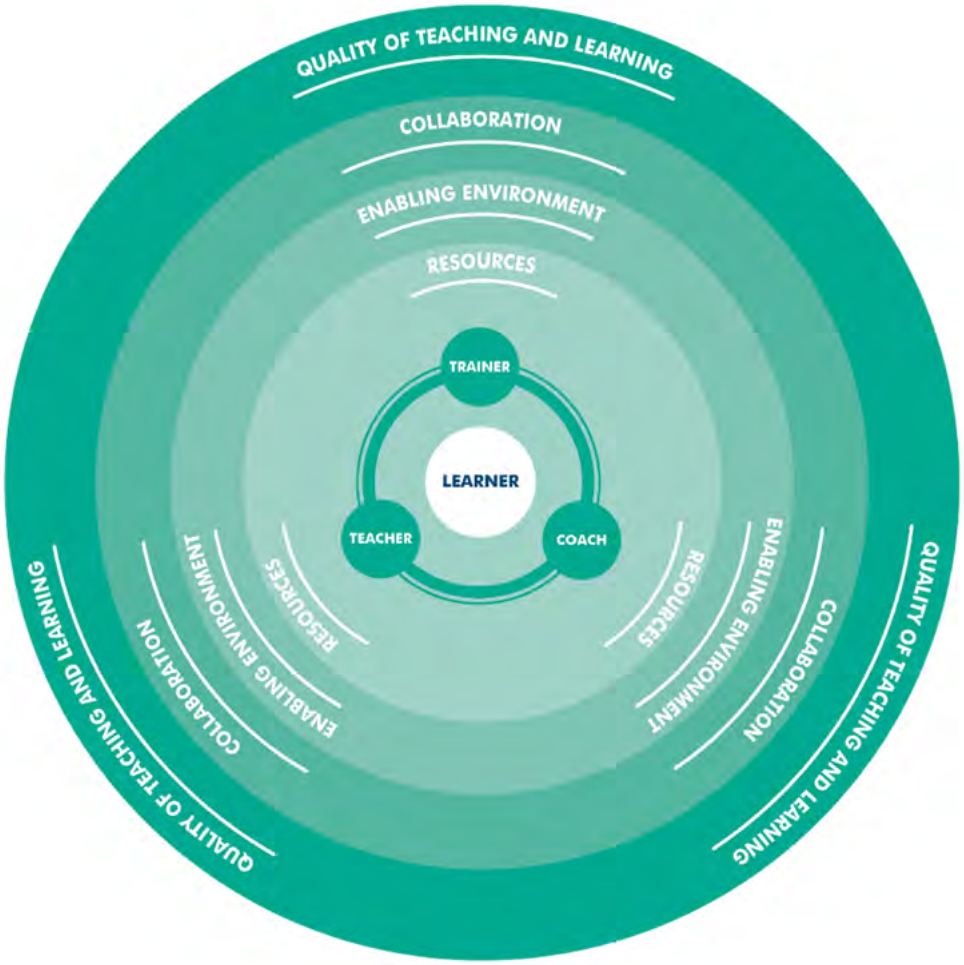

Figure 2: Ana Aqra's theory of change

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Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Center for Educational Resources and Development, Lebanese University-Faculty of Pedagogy, Caritas Switzerland, Institute for International Cooperation in Education-University of Teacher Education Zug, Ana Aqra Association. (in press). Quality Teaching and Learning Model: Handbook for effective teaching and learning in the Lebanese context.

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Under her leadership, the organization has grown from working with 10,000 young people in Bengaluru to over 1 million children across five states. She has been recognized as one of 75 Women Entrepreneurs Transforming India for 2021 by Niti Aayog, GOI. Suchetha is on the Advisory Council of Amani Institute, Kizazi and EdHeroes Foundation, Russia. She is also an advisor to many young women social entrepreneurs and non-profits in India.
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Together with Scott V. Solberg she coordinates a Network on Social and Emotional Competences and Career Development (SEL IRN), which aims to study similarities and differences across cultures and foster SEL skills in educators to make students ready for the world of work and a life of quality. It has been recognized by WERA (World Education Research Association) as an International Research Network.

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