Measuring participation skills in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries

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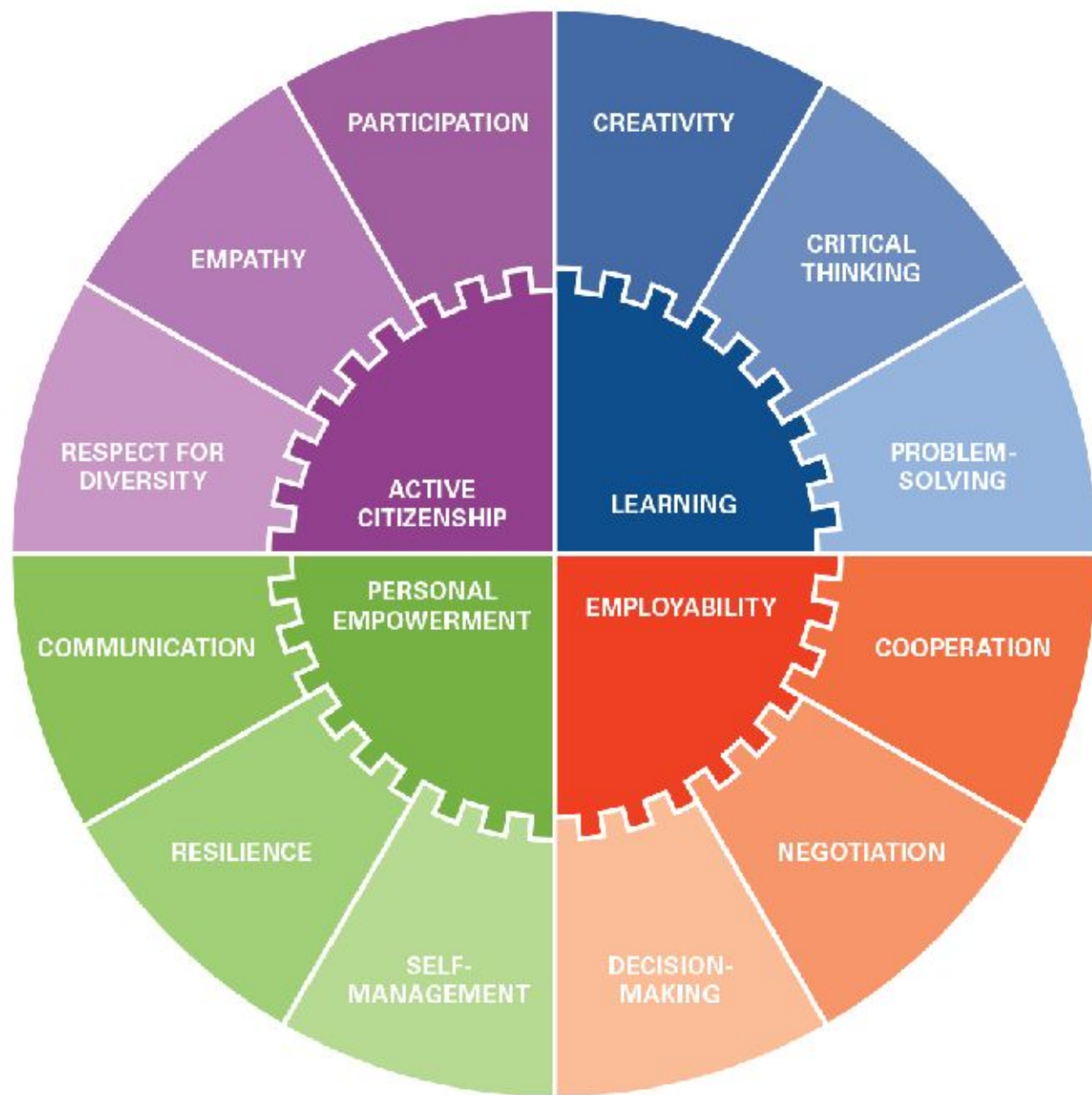**Professor Bryony Hoskins, University of Roehampton**

Overview

- Life skills' definition and conceptual framework

- Purpose of developing measurement instruments for life skills in MENA region

- 5 research steps

- Exemplar case – Participation

- Outcomes and impact of the project

Life skills

Life skills

What are life skills? Why they are important?

- Transferable skills, enable individuals to deal with everyday life, and to progress and succeed in school, work and societal life
- They are comprised of skills, attitudes, values, behaviours and domain-based knowledge which need to be applied in harmony with each other

- Underexplored in the world, particularly in MENA region
- Equip children with knowledge, fundamental skills and etc. to face future challenges

Life skills framework

PARTICIPATION
CREATIVITY
EMPATHY
CRITICAL THINKING
RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY
ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
LEARNING
PROBLEM-SOLVING
PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT
EMPLOYABILITY
COMMUNICATION
COOPERATION
RESILIENCE
NEGOTIATION
SELF-MANAGEMENT
DECISION-MAKING

Skill coverage

- Publication (12 Skills were covered)

- Life skills measurement instrument (9 Skills were covered)

- Presentation focus (1 Active Citizenship Skill – Participation)

Why develop measurement instruments for life skills in MENA region?

- Establish the extent that current education systems are providing the learning on life skills

- To improve Education Systems performance in teaching and learning life skills

- To develop standardized approach in measuring the proficiency of children and youth in life skills

Learning assesssment

Learning assessment

Purpose of final measurement instrument

- Grade 7 (12-14 years) with expectations to move to different age groups in the long run

- Expected to be used widely in the MENA region and beyond

- Countries expected to use instrument within suit of national assessments (not a ranking exercise)

Research Step 1. Review existing instruments (based on the publication contents)

Building from the life skills conceptual framework;

For each skill a review was undertaken

- Operationalise the definition and identified measurable attributes

- Identify the relationship with Social and Economic outcomes

- Identify the development in children and youth

- Identify the Education interventions that improve each Life skills

- Reviewed existing measurement instruments on that skill

Reviews

Participation
(based on & extended from analysis of coverage)

Active citizenship skill

Skills	Coverage from existing resources (%)	No. of highly suitable instruments	No. of open scales			If it is open, no. of cognitive and affective			Development required
			Open	No response	Not open	Cog-Self-report	Cog-test	No. of affective	
Participation	80%	7	6	0	1			6	(1) Knowledge on participation; (2) Scales in critical thinking, communication and negotiation

Research Step 2. Country visits

Field trial

- Egypt, Tunisia & Palestine
- Ministries of Education

Research Step 3. The Field Trial

- Aims: Test and validate instruments

- Countries : Egypt, Tunisia & Palestine

- Data size & Age group: 20 schools/ country, about 1400 students/ country, Grade 7 (12-14 years old)

- Student questionnaire & Principal questionnaire

- Started in April, 2019, all data are received now and in the process of data analysis

- Excellent data quality

Example -'Participation'

Participation

- *'Partaking in, and influencing, processes, decisions and activities' (adapted from UNICEF, 2001).*

- *The type of participation is said to be anchored within the need for participation **based upon knowledge and critical thought** and in line with the **values of Human Rights** (UNICEF and partners, 2017).*

- *'**Allow children to have a say** in their education, and requires teachers and head teachers to **listen** to them and involve them as much as possible in school life' (UN Rights of the Child).*

Measurable Attributes of Participation

Participation

- Participation in the decision making of the school
- Actual/intended participation at school /community/ work
- Interest in social and civic issues
- Actual/intended participation in civic engagement
- Attitudes towards participation
- Self-efficacy in the context of participation.

Interest in social and civic issues

How often do you do each of the following activities?	Daily or almost daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never or hardly ever
Talking with your family about < civic or social issues (e.g. poverty, climate change)>.				
Talking with friends about < civic or social issues (e.g. poverty, climate change)>.				
Talking with your family about what is happening in other countries.				
Talking with friends about what is happening in other countries.				

Participation

Actual/intended participation in civic engagement

How often are you involved in each of the following activities?	Daily or almost daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never or hardly ever
Using the internet to find information about <civic or social issues (e.g. poverty, climate change)>.				
Posting a comment or image regarding <a civic or social issue (e.g. poverty, climate change)> on the internet or social media.				
Sharing or commenting on another person's online post regarding <a civic or social issue (e.g. poverty, climate change)>.				

Source: LSCE item listings - participation

Participation

Participation in the decision-making of the school

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about student participation at school?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students' opinions should be taken into account in decision-making processes.				
Students should have a voice in deciding on school rules.				
Students should be involved in deciding how class time is spent.				
Students should be given the opportunity to actively participate in school decisions.				
Students should be given the opportunity to participate in planning school events (e.g. <sports events, arts events, school tours>).				

Source: LSCE item listings - participation

Participation

Research Step 4. Development of final instrument (In process)

- Test reliability and validity of instruments 45 items per skill and final instrument will be around 30 items.

- Exploratory analysis of data – associations between skills and methods taught in schools and between skills

(The sample too small to be completely representative and allow for more sophisticated analysis)

Field trial

Research Step 5. Full implementation of the study?

Field trial

- 2020 plan for MENA countries to implement full national study

- Move to different age groups?

- Cover all 12 skills?

Outcomes

Publication

- Research and evidence base from which the life skills instrument is developed
- Online annex to details of existing instruments for 12 skills: www.lsce-mena.org

Measurement Instruments

- Single high quality measurement instrument on life skills
- New & innovative measurement instruments, i.e. situational judgement test, are developed for MENA region

Data analysis

- Further data analysis

Impact

Life skills measurement

- Working with 3 countries Ministries of Education to develop their understanding on Life Skills and Citizenship Education and how they can be taught

- Working with UNICEF and World Bank country offices in the region to develop their understanding of the above

- Working with IEA and NFER to develop high quality measurement instruments on life skills

- Development of a high quality instrument that will be adopted by UNICEF, World Bank and national education ministries at least in Palestine, Egypt and Tunisia which will enable them to monitor and transform their own education systems