MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

VOLUME 1: THE GUIDELINES

JACOBS FOUNDATION

THE JACOBS FOUNDATION GUIDELINE ON

MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

VOLUME 1: THE GUIDELINES

DEVELOPED IN COOPERATION
WITH CLARE HANBURY AND TINA MALTI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Case studies and "real life" examples from our partners

Templates that can be downloaded from our website www.jacobsfoundation.org for direct use

Definition of core concepts, crucial information and recommendations

Examples and quotes from our partners

> GLOSSARY OF SELECTED KEY TERMINOLOGY[1]

Control group. A group of adolescents who have many similar characteristics to those who will receive the life skills intervention in the experimental group. In contrast to the experimental group, the control group does not receive the intervention program. Participants are randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups.

Counterfactual. Outcomes in the absence of the intervention. The counterfactual is necessary for comparing actual outcomes to what they would have been in the absence of the intervention, i.e. with versus without.

Effective. Evaluators measure the quality of attainment in meeting goals or the ability of a program to produce the desired effects.

Efficient. Evaluators outline the benefits and cost of the program for comparison (cost-benefit ratio).

Evaluation. The systematic assessment of an ongoing or completed project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the fulfillment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible, enabling the incorporation of lessons learnt into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth of a program. An assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, ongoing, or completed life skills intervention.

[1] http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf

Experimental design. In order to ensure comparability, an experimental design randomly assigns participants to the intervention and control groups.

External validity. The term refers to the degree to which the results of the intervention can be generalized to other programs and/or contexts.

Impact. Positive or negative, primary and secondary effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Internal validity. There is a causal relationship between intervention and outcomes; the intervention directly contributes to achieving the expected results.

Matched comparison group. A comparison group that is selected not by randomization but by identifying the key similarities between the intervention and comparison groups. Ideally, the two groups should be as similar as possible, particularly with regard to characteristics that are known to have potentially important effects on the study outcomes.

Non-experimental design. Programs that do not use a control or comparison group to evaluate program outcomes.

Outcome. The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs.

Outputs. The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.

Pilot study. A practice or small-scale study that is conducted to prepare for the main study. Typically, this involves the pretesting of procedures and methods behind a project idea.

Qualitative. Information that describes the properties that an object possesses. The properties are categorized into classes that may be assigned numeric values. However, there is no significance to the values themselves (UNECE, 2000).

Quantitative. Information that expresses a certain measured quantity, amount or numeric value. Usually, there are measurement units associated with the information (UNECE, 2000).

Quasi-experimental design. Research designs similar to experimental designs, except that the comparison group is selected not by randomization but by matching (see matched comparison group).

Sample. Selection of a subset of observations or cases from all observations or cases in a population.

Summative evaluation. A study conducted at the end of an intervention to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were produced. Summative evaluation is intended to provide information about the worth of the program.

Theory of change. The assumptions that link a program's inputs and activities to the attainment of desired end.

Validity. The extent to which the data collection strategies and instruments measure what they purport to measure.

FOREWORD

JACOBS FOUNDATION AND A FOCUS ON LIFE SKILLS

The mission of the Jacobs Foundation is to foster children and youth development. It does this by supporting institutions and projects that contribute to the welfare, social productivity, and social inclusion of current and future generations of young people by understanding and promoting their personal development and employability, their respect for and integration with nature and culture, and the challenges posed by social, economic, or technological changes. The Jacobs Foundation pursues this goal in two ways: by funding excellent research and through social interventions. Many of our operational partners in the Area of Social Intervention focus on the development of life skills, such as self-confidence, leadership, self-efficacy, decision-making, responsibility, in children and youth. Many times, our operational partners find it difficult to clearly understand, define, track and measure the development of life skills in their projects, particularly in settings where learning is less formal.

THE PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

Inspired by the willingness of our partners to take up the challenge of project level evaluation, we have developed these guidelines: Monitoring and Evaluating Life Skills for Youth Development. The first volume of these guidelines aims to provide a better understanding of what we mean by life skills and why we think they are of such importance for children and youth development, as well as a hands-on practical guideline for our operational partners about how to monitor and evaluate the development and acquisition of life skills. The second volume aims to provide a tool box for monitoring and evaluating life skills in the field. The guidelines were developed in close cooperation with representatives from our existing operational partners, and with the precious support of two experts in the field of M&E and life skills.

THE CHALLENGE OF MONITORING & EVALUATION

Many people feel afraid of evaluation, especially those working at project level. There are good reasons for this. A key purpose of evaluation is to check that projects are being done well. As a result of evaluation, donors can stop or change the projects they fund and staff may lose or be asked to change their role. For those at the centre of the changes, this can be frightening! But another, higher purpose to evaluation is learning. When individuals or organizations become self-reflective, succeed at their job, spend money wisely and help young people effect positive change in their lives, this is ultimately what good children and youth development projects aim for. It is complex to pin down the ever-shifting sands of development and evaluating development projects is as much an art as a science. These guidelines aim to walk readers between the two and, above all develop a stronger instinct for, a confidence in and improved skills to practice and share an ability in evaluative thinking. Edward Pauly, Director of Research and Evaluation, Wallace Foundation September 2010

What is it you don't know that, if you knew it,
you'd be able to make a breakthrough?

Edward Pauly, Director of Research and Evaluation, Wallace Foundation September 2010[2]

²⁾ **http://philanthropyjournal.org/resources/special-reports/corporate-giving/
wallace-aims-%E2%80%98harvest%E2%80%99-know-how**

HOW THE GUIDELINES WERE DEVELOPED

These monitoring and evaluation guidelines are a co-creation between the Jacobs Foundation, its operational partners and two experts in the field of M&E of life skills and youth development. The process of developing the guidelines included:

► researching existing effective monitoring and evaluation methods and tools for development;
► collecting tools that are being used by operational partners;
► creating a booklet of monitoring and evaluation tools;
► testing some of these in a number of different countries and settings;
► coming together in a workshop to discuss the best framework for the guidelines, the key concepts for inclusion, tools and data analysis methods;
► drafting the guidelines for review;
► conducting a field review involving projects in ten countries; and
► finalizing the first edition.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDELINES

The guidelines comprise two volumes. **The first volume** has three theoretical parts.

► a first chapter on life skills which aims to present to all of our partners from research and intervention an introduction to life skills and why they are important from our perspective and how we suggest to define them.
► a second chapter on the monitoring and evaluation of life skills which intends to give guidelines to our partners from intervention practice who are responsible for designing, managing and monitoring projects in the field, how to design and implement monitoring and evaluation processes to follow up on and measure the development of life skills monitoring and evaluation.
► a third chapter on impact evaluations of Life Skills Programs for Youth which aims to give our partners from practice who are responsible for designing and managing projects an insight of what impact evaluation entails – as opposed to internal and simple external evaluations.

The second volume comprises the practical monitoring and evaluation toolkit.

FORMATS

The guidelines are available in various formats in English and Spanish:

► a hard copy version of the Jacobs Foundation Guidelines on monitoring and evaluating life skills for youth development in English
► a pdf version in English and Spanish, available at www.jacobsfoundation.org
► templates can be downloaded from our website in Word format, www.jacobsfoundation.org

We hope that these guidelines are useful to your work and wish you great success with your life skills programs for child and youth development.

Dr Bernd Ebersold
CEO

CHAPTER 1
DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS IN YOUTH

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> INTRODUCTION

Life skills help young people navigate the challenges of everyday life. They enable them to develop into healthy, responsible, and productive adults. Adolescent life skills are central to psychological theories that aim to understand how skills and competencies develop. From a practical standpoint, the promotion of life skills has been identified as a key resource for enhancing positive and productive development in youth. This chapter gives an introduction to the development of life skills in youth. After providing a working definition of life skills, four core dimensions of life skills are identified, and examples for each dimension are provided. Next, major life skill frameworks for youth development are outlined. These frameworks include the Positive Youth Development framework and the Developmental Risk and Resiliency framework. Finally, implications for the monitoring and evaluation of intervention programs are elaborated.

> DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS IN YOUTH

As today's societies rapidly become ever more diversified both demographically and politically, our youth and adolescents face multifaceted challenges. What do these societal demands imply for the key skills that young people need to acquire? Answering this question is important not only for maintaining the quality of civic life and social cohesion, but also for enabling children and adolescents to develop into healthy, productive, and autonomous adults. Defining such skills can also improve our assessment of how well prepared young people are for life's challenges, and it can help us identify overarching goals for monitoring and evaluating education and intervention practices.

Scholars, practitioners, and institutional administrators agree that having life skills help young people navigate these societal challenges, thereby contributing to their healthy, positive, and productive development. But what are these life skills, and how do they develop? The purpose of this chapter is to define the key life skills in young people, identify their core domains, and review the theories and empirical evidence that address them and how they are acquired. The need for a developmental perspective is highlighted (i.e., how the skills develop as the person

develops), and the implications of a life skills framework for monitoring and evaluating educational and intervention practices are discussed.

> WHAT ARE LIFE SKILLS?

In an effort to identify the skills needed to maintain the quality of civic live, a successful and meaningful personal life, and positive social relationships, authors have proposed various definitions and conceptualizations of life skills. This chapter focuses on the development of life skills in young people. The World Health Organization (1997) defines youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24 years and adolescents as people between the ages of 10 and 19 years. The term "young people" can be used as shorthand for these groups combined (ages 10 to 24). These definitions have been adopted for the remainder of the chapter.

In general, life skills are considered to be those abilities that help promote well-being, positive health outcomes, and productive development. They comprise a set of core skills that empower young people to take positive steps to promote health, positive social relationships, and positive contributions to society. The question is what young people must have to function well in society as they find it. Life skills are important in helping them shape their world, not just cope with it. Thus, the concept of life skills transcends previous concepts such as coping and adaptation to circumstances; it presupposes an active, autonomous, and responsible stance towards the self in the social world (Rychen & Salganik, 2003).

According to the World Health Organization (1997), life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. By emphasizing adaptation and a positive orientation, this commonly used defin-

ition is consistent with the skills-based, positive approach to youth development (e.g. Benson, 2007).

The Pan-American Health Organization defines life skills as social and interpersonal skills (including communication, refusal skills, assertiveness and empathy), cognitive skills (including decision-making, critical thinking, and self-evaluation), and emotional coping skills (including stress management and increasing an internal locus of control; see Mangrulkar, Vince Whitman, & Posner, 2001).

UNICEF (2002) defines life skills as psychosocial and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop the coping and self-management skills needed for a healthy and productive life. Life skills can be applied to actions directed at either the self, other people, or the local environment; their goal is to promote health and well-being at all these levels.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) likewise emphasizes the necessity of good life skills for achieving the outcomes desired by both society and its individual members, who must cope with important societal demands in a wide variety of contexts. Life skills are important for everybody (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). In contrast to the previously cited definitions, the OECD definition emphasizes "competence" rather than "skills." It implies that competence is more than just skills; it is also the ability to cope with complex demands by drawing on and mobilizing all of one's psychosocial resources (including skills) in a given context. Thus, life skills include not only behaviour, but also attitudes and knowledge. The OECD specifies three key competencies.

► The first is the **ability to use a wide range of tools to interact constructively with the social context.** The tools can be either physical (e.g., application of information

technology) or sociocultural (e.g., language). To adapt such tools to meet their goals, people must understand them and be able to use them interactively.

► The second competency is **the ability to engage with others in an increasingly interdependent world.** Because individuals encounter other people from a diverse range of backgrounds, the ability to interact in heterogeneous groups is of particular importance.

► The third competency is **the ability to take responsibility for managing one's life, place it in the broader social context,** and behave autonomously and responsibly.

► The need to think and act reflectively is central to all these competencies. Self-reflection involves the ability not only to apply a formula routinely, but also **to deal with challenges and changes, to learn from experience, and to think and act critically.**

Other definitions of life skills follow the OECD definition in strongly **emphasizing the ability to balance different types of skills, which include behaviour, cognitions, values, attitudes, and emotions.** Thus, these definitions encompass the whole panoply of skills that individuals need for well-being and productive development. For example, UNICEF (2001) defines life skills as a behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills. The ability to coordinate this interplay of various intrapersonal (i.e., within the person) and interpersonal (i.e., between persons) abilities means the difference between success and risk in dealing with the challenges of everyday life. In short, these definitions encompass a wide range of intra- and interpersonal skills that young people can use to integrate their knowledge, emotions,

values, and actions to achieve specific social or academic goals and contribute to society. Some definitions also emphasize the need to consider spirituality as an important area in which life skills are embedded (Wikipedia, 2010).

In the U.S., the question of what life skills youth need has been addressed in a 21st century framework. This framework defines not only the intra- and interpersonal skills needed to navigate the challenges of today's world, but also an educational policy that identifies core skills, a set of specific goals, and the support systems that young people need for positive development (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009).

Most definitions of life skills are rather broad and generic; they often include the term "livelihood skills," which refers to the basic abilities needed to pursue individual and household economic goals (e.g., technical/vocational skills, job-seeking skills, and entrepreneurial skills). Although addressing life skills would be meaningless if how one earns a living were not taken into account, livelihood skills alone are not enough for achieving long-term change; young people also need the higher-order intra- and interpersonal skills discussed above.

Because the above definitions are meant to apply to the general population, they are not developmentally oriented. If we are interested in young people, adaptation and positive outcomes must be defined developmentally. This means that the level of a given life skill needs to be considered in respect to a young person's age and in relation to his or her general biological, cognitive, emotional, and social development (i.e., age appropriateness of life skills). For example, they have defined life skills as those competencies that enable young people to deal with the challenges of their lives in a manner that is adequate to their age and thus allows for healthy and positive development (e.g., Malti &

Noam, 2008). What does positive adaptation during the successive periods of adolescence and youth mean? Generally, people are considered to be skilled if they master the tasks that society considers appropriate for a person of that age or stage (Havighurst, 1972) and that are inherent in human development (Erikson, 1968). The WHO (1997) defines life skills as those skills and competencies that enable children and adolescents to deal adequately with their daily challenges and developmental tasks. Based on this literature, we propose the following comprehensive working definition of life skills in young people:

WORKING DEFINITION OF LIFE SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

For young people, life skills are the abilities that enable them to deal with the challenges of their lives in a manner that is adequate for their age and experience. They facilitate healthy, positive and productive personal development and enable meaningful contributions to society. These intra- and interpersonal abilities are inter-related, and collectively they provide a basis for identifying core skills.* These skills can be applied to the self or to others. Central to this life skills framework is the need for young people to demonstrate moral and cognitive maturity by thinking for themselves and taking responsibility for their actions and their social and emotional development; life skills transcend the knowledge and abilities taught by others.

* While the term "ability" refers to a more stable capacity, the term "skills" depicts an acquired capacity; "competence" is an umbrella term referring to a set of skills.

THE CORE DIMENSIONS OF LIFE SKILLS

Young people need a wide range of intra- and interpersonal skills to face the complex challenges of today's world, but it would be of little practical value to produce a long list of all the skills they may need in various contexts and at various times in their lives. A better choice is to consider only the skills that are most helpful to young people in managing situations in an age-appropriate way. The preceding definition of life skills makes it clear that the core skills must not be chosen arbitrarily. Rather, their selection should be the result of carefully considering the individual and psychosocial prerequisites for a healthy and productive individual life and a well-functioning society. Collectively, these core skills can be considered a loosely coupled system of different aspects of specific abilities. Their underlying unity is represented by a structural continuity of developmental changes. This framework implies that in any given individual, some skills are well developed and others poorly developed. In addition, contextual variables (e.g., level of social support) can influence how well a skill develops. Complexity is inherent in frameworks that are as broad and comprehensive as life skills, and this complexity has implications for measuring, monitoring, and evaluating life skills.

To answer the question of what skills young people need to cope with the changes in modern society, we must begin with a coherent concept of what constitutes the core skills. The framework must consist of a set of specific abilities bound together in an integrated whole. It is necessary for adaptation and healthy outcomes to balance different cognitive, emotional, and behavioural skills, as well as creative capacities and psychological resources such as attitudes, motives, and values. This ability to integrate different life skills crucially depends on how young

WHAT ARE LIFE SKILLS?

people construct their social experiences, including their thoughts, emotions, and relationships with others, and how they integrate them into their self-concept (Keller, 2004). This task requires that they reach a level of social maturity that allows them to distance themselves from social pressures, adopt different perspectives (by sensing what others feel as well as what they themselves feel), make independent judgements, and take responsibility for their actions (Rychen & Sarganik, 2003). Adoption of this integrative framework has led to broad agreement on 10 to 12 specific intra- and interpersonal life skills that young people must have to deal effectively with the challenges they face in their lives in an age-appropriate and adaptive manner. These core skills include abilities to make decisions, solve conflicts and problems constructively, think creatively, think critically, communicate effectively, be self-aware, deal with stress, regulate one's emotions, empathize with others, and establish and maintain good social relationships (e.g., Wenzel, Weichold, & Silbereisen, 2009; WHO, 1997). These core skills can be classified in four broad dimensions: (a) critical thinking and cognitive skills, (b), coping skills and self-management, (c) social and moral skills, and (d) communication skills (Table 1).

Table 1 provides key examples of the various life skill dimensions, but the list is not exhaustive. Logically, it is possible und important to separate the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. However, in everyday life, what happens inside a person and his or her relationships is continuously connected and exchanged (Mead, 1934; Sullivan, 1953). For example, in a dialogue between two friends who discuss their relationship, many of the points made will trigger self-reflection, which in turn will shape a response.

As the list reflects a positive, asset-based view of young people's development, it is consistent with conceptualizations of youth development such as the risk and resiliency framework (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Gabrielle-Reed, 2009; Malti & Noam, 2008), and the positive youth development perspective, which treats all adolescents as having strengths and potential.

CORE DIMENSIONS AND EXAMPLES OF LIFE SKILLS

Table 1

Level	Dimension	Life skills*
Intra-personal	Critical thinking and cognitive skills	Self-reflection; autonomous, flexible, and creative thinking; problem-solving; decision-making
	Coping and self-management	Self-awareness and self-confidence; self-esteem; emotion regulation; stress management
Inter-personal	Social and moral skills	Social responsibility and cooperativeness; empathy and caring for others; establishing and maintaining relationships; respecting and appreciating others
	Communication	Adequate expression of thoughts, emotions, motives, and values; assertiveness

* The quality of each of these skills depends on the level of development.

Scientists studying adolescent development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) have proposed the "Six Cs" of this development (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution). They are a way to conceptualize positive youth development and integrate its various separate indicators, including self-esteem, empathy, and emotion regulation (Lerner, 2004). Likewise, the developmental assets model incorporates a set of internal assets that promote positive youth development. They include commitment to learning, positive moral values (e.g., responsibility and caring), social competencies, and positive identity (Benson & Scales, 2009). The contribution to society and value components of life skills, in particular, have been underemphasized in the literature, despite their importance if life skills are to be conceptualized as including the ability to take responsibility for oneself and others (see Table 1; also Latzko & Malti, 2010).

Any life skills framework must be anchored in a perspective that emphasizes the mutual and dynamic interaction between individuals and society. For example, an emphasis on democratic values implies that adolescents need to be able to both achieve their developmental potential and contribute to a well-functioning society (Edelstein, 2010). This complementarity of individual and societal goals should be reflected in a framework of skills that acknowledges both individuals' autonomous development and their competent and responsible interactions with others.

A life skills framework places several requirements on young people in different contexts and different situations. It specifies that the key life skills must (a) be of particular value, (b) have multiple areas of usefulness, and (c) be needed by everyone. The first of these, that the skill should be valued as a fundamental resource of human capital, means that application of the skill should have measurable social benefits (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Recent research reinforces the view that human capital brings key individual and social benefits such as better health, an improved sense of well-being, and increased civic engagement. The second condition, that skills should yield benefits and support in various contexts, means that they should apply in multiple areas of life. For example, some skills are needed in individuals' professional, personal, and civic lives, as well as to promote their health. It is such universal skills that meet the criterion of being core. The third condition, that core skills should be important for all young people, deemphasizes skills that are of use only in a specific occupation or within a specific group. Finally, both scholars and practitioners agree that core life skills are applied in a wide variety of social contexts and academic content areas. They also are critical to interventions such as drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention, resilience enhancement, peace promotion, prevention of aggression and developmental disorders, career counseling, and many others.

It is important to keep in mind that the life skills definitions described above do not include external systems of support. Rather, the focus is on internal competencies and abilities, along with internal values and attitudes. This is in contrast to other theoretical accounts in the positive youth development tradition, which have conceptualized the dimensions of external support systems as a set of "assets" such as supportive relationships (e.g., Benson, 2007). Thus, this latter approach highlights the importance of social context in development. In the context of projects of Jacobs Foundation partners, the social context component is often crucial, because many of these life skills programs for youth intend to mitigate adverse social context factors.

LIFE SKILLS FRAMEWORKS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

> LIFE SKILLS FRAME-WORKS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The answer to the question of what skills young people need to deal with the challenges of today's society must be rooted in a developmental framework. Such a framework helps us understand the social cognitions, emotions, and motives that young people apply in constructing their reality at any given time. Furthermore, it helps the practitioner communicate with young people in ways that match their understanding of the social world, thereby allowing the practitioner to support their growth and thriving.

The primary theories of adolescent development have most often evolved in the tradition of cognitive and psychosocial theories. These theories usually describe development in terms of sequences of increasing levels of complexity, maturity, and differentiation (e.g., Piaget, 1955). For example, Erikson's psychosocial theory describes the development of identity across the lifespan in socio-historic terms (Erikson, 1968). Identity refers to feelings of self-trust that develop through our daily interactions with supportive others. At each stage, people experience a conflict typical of that stage, which serves as a turning point in their development. The successful mastery of this conflict, such as identity refinement in adolescence, helps to enhance strengths. In contrast, unresolved crises are assumed to cause disaffection and maladaptive outcomes.

Many of the early developmental theories looked at adolescent development through the lens of a deficit model. During the later phases of theory development, and informed by an increasing number of empirical studies of adolescent development, theories have been increasingly influenced by the idea that adolescence is characterized by diversity (inter-individual differences), a systematic sequence of change and stability in development (intra-individual differences), and context dependence. Recent perspectives suggest that increases in well-being, thriving, and social contributions are possible for all adolescents if their strengths are accompanied by adequate social support.

In the following subsections, we briefly discuss the two main frameworks that emphasize life skills as the conceptual foundation for both adolescent development and prevention: (a) the positive youth development framework, and (b) the developmental risk and resiliency framework.

THE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Positive Youth Development framework evolved from concepts grounded in developmental science, i.e., the systematic study of the processes that cause continuity and change over time in the bio-psychological characteristics of human beings (Cairns, 2006, Gottlieb, 1997; Lerner, 2002; Lerner & Steinberg, 2004; Overton, 2006). This approach aims to investigate and prevent risky behaviour (e.g., antisocial behaviour) by the enhancement of life skills, supportive relationships, and positive social conditions. Furthermore, it aims to promote thriving behaviour (e.g., civic engagement) (Benson & Scales, 2009; Zeldin, 2000) by young people integrating their social support systems. Research supports the link between positive development and both risk and thriving behaviour (see Benson, Scales, Hamilton & Sesma, Jr., 2006, for a systematic review). More recently, the debate has shifted from how to enhance positive outcomes and decrease dysfunctional outcomes at the individual level to how to improve the settings and contexts of youths' daily lives in which these outcomes occur (Shinn & Yoshikawa, 2008).

LIFE SKILLS FRAMEWORKS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

FRAMEWORK I: POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT		Table 2
Basic principles	**Exemplary model**	**Implications for interventions**
All young persons have the capacity for positive development	Developmental asset model:	Positive development is enabled by multiple support contexts
	Fourty developmental assets that enable thriving behaviour and decrease risky behaviour:	All youth can benefit from supportive relationship
Strengths are more important than weaknesses in development	Internal assets (i.e., life skills)	The strategies for promoting life skills depend on social context
	External assets (i.e., development-promoting features of the social context)	

Several frameworks have been developed to describe the elements of positive development in youth (e.g., Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Connell, Gambone, & Smith, 2000). There is consensus that positive youth development applies to all young people. Each young person has the inherent capacity for positive development and can benefit from supportive relationships. This is true regardless of the context, examples of which are gender, age group, and ethnicity (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004). In contrast, how positive youth development is applied can vary from one context to another. For example, empowerment is considered a developmental asset for all youth, but the strategies for promoting this asset can vary considerably as a function of social context (Benson & Scales, 2009).

Young people are considered the major agents in their own development, which means that they have the ability to create the supportive relationships and communities they need to grow and thrive (Larson, 2006). The positive youth development approach is thus holistic in the sense that it considers the community in relation to the whole child and the child as a full partner in this relationship (Damon, 20004). The set of key skills it incorporates refers not only to the development of one's personal identity (intrapersonal skills), but also to one's contributions to and affiliation with civil society (interpersonal and moral skills; Youniss & Yates, 1997; Damon, 2004). Furthermore, positive youth development is a process that inherently occurs during the continual exchanges between individuals and a supportive social context. A positive developmental trajectory is established when youth participate in multiple relationships, programs, and institutions that promote their health and productive development.

A wide range of empirical studies has supported the diverse and complex relations between various life skills, positive developmental outcomes, and problem behaviour (for reviews of this literature, see Benson et al. 2006; Malti & Perren, in press). Recent research has increasingly focused on the trajectories of positive and negative development and their inter-relationships (e.g., Lewin-Binzan et al., 2010). Future research linking developmental trajectories of positive development and dysfunction with developmental processes and development-by-context interactions will lead the field of developmental science to a revised understanding of the richness of youth development.

LIFE SKILLS FRAMEWORKS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The developmental asset model

The developmental asset model, developed by researchers at the Search Institute, is anchored in a positive youth development framework (Benson, 2007). The model identified 40 such assets; the assets are grouped into 20 external assets (development-promoting features of the social context) and 20 internal assets (skills, values, and competencies; Scales & Leffert, 2004). The assets are then placed in four higher-order categories. The external categories are (a) support, (b) empowerment, (c) boundaries and expectations, and (d) constructive use of time. Healthy development is enhanced when youth experience multiple settings, each of which provides support. The four internal categories reflect comprehensive life skills: (a) learning, (b) positive values, (b) social competencies, and (d) positive identity (Benson & Scales, 2009).

The developmental asset model mirrors the positive youth development framework in emphasizing that strengths are more important than weaknesses in development and that positive development is enabled by multiple support contexts. Both frameworks are about developing adequate life skills in youth, the importance of mentoring and support, and the reflection about commonality of experiences, all of which occur despite national, geographic, ethnic, and gender differences (see the Study Group on Adolescence in the 21st Century; Larson, Bradford Brown, & Mortimer, 2002).

Although frameworks in the positive youth development tradition, including the developmental asset model, have significant developmental implications, they often are not entirely clear about what kinds of development occur and how they occur. A comprehensive developmental perspective must go beyond a focus on enhancing positive development and preventing behavioural and emotional symptoms. Many conceptual questions remain unanswered. For example, how

do the core life skills evolve over time? Are they different at different times, or do they remain stable? How can we distinguish between positive and negative pathways that underlie development? These questions define the next research agenda for the developmental field.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL RISK AND RESILIENCY FRAMEWORK

What does development mean, and how do life skills help promote it? The developmental risk and resiliency perspective is a comprehensive framework entailing the dynamic interplay between life skills, social context, and biological and neurological factors. Developmental scientists have elaborated in what sense skills, assets, and competencies are developmental and what that means for both a developmental theory and intervention in the risk and resiliency developmental framework and systems theory (Cicchetti & Cohen, 2006). This approach has also been emphasized in public health as a way to design successful social policies (Jenson & Fraser, 2006). It requires that the risks be conceptualized as developmental disorders emerging from adolescents' developmental history. This history includes the adolescents' life experiences, the evolution of the meaning structures embedded in their social contexts, and their inherited predispositions. For example, the development of aggressive behaviour is associated with particular social cognitions and emotions that individuals draw upon to construct their social world in each level of development. It is also crucial to this perspective that the human ability to change and recover, as well as to develop resiliency, be treated as a developmental capacity supported by the adoption of a developmentally differentiated approach. Although risks can turn into problems, they also can encourage the evolution of strengths, thriving, and resilience. Resiliency has been defined as the ability of an in-

FRAMEWORK II: RISK AND RESILIENCY DEVELOPMENT		Table 3
Basic principles	**Exemplary model**	**Implications for interventions**
The associations of positive (i.e., resiliency) and negative (i.e., risk) outcomes and life skills are intertwined They depend on differences in underlying developmental processes	Clover model: Four different developmental types in adolescence: action, assertiveness, belonging, reflection Each type includes typical strengths (resilience) and risks (symptoms) Every adolescent needs to balance each of these developmental needs	Interventions need to be informed by developmental knowledge and assessments Developmentally differential interventions should be implemented

dividual to develop and succeed despite adversity (Masten et al., 2009). It is not stable; instead, it continually evolves as individuals interact with their social environment. Because young people are active meaning makers who construct and invent their world, they can overcome previous traumas by giving new meaning to old events, self-reflecting, and exploring alternative thoughts and actions.

Developmental scientists have identified two key developmental outcomes, both of which apply to multiple situations and developmental domains. The first is increased competence (i.e., resiliency, which is demonstrated by the acquisition and further development of the knowledge or skills needed to guide one's behaviour. The second is increased dysfunction (i.e., risk), or the recurrent manifestation of difficulty in maintaining control and integrating one's actions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). It is widely accepted that the association of positive (i.e., resiliency) and negative (i.e., risk) outcomes and developmentally rooted skills are intertwined and depend on differences in underlying developmental processes. The underlying research question is how to understand the developmental pro-

cesses that produce competence or resiliency as opposed to dysfunction or risk. The course of development depends on exposure, that is, contact between the developing person and the proximal processes in which the person engages. These, in turn, are rooted in the continual exchanges between the person, the person's environment, and the successive periods of social stability and change (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). In short, developmental outcomes must be understood as the result of a dynamic interplay between biological systems, human development, and social context.

The clover model

The clover model (e.g., Malti & Noam, 2008, 2009) is the attempt to conceptualize the specific relations of development with both risks and resiliencies (i.e., competencies). Elaboration of the clover model has been guided by research, prevention practices, and the goal of creating a sound developmental theory. The model incorporates different levels of socio-cognitive, emotional, and social functioning, as well as the key vulnerabilities, risks, and symptoms that arise at each level of development in

LIFE SKILLS FRAMEWORKS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

adolescence. Each developmental level causes new strengths to emerge and provides opportunities to rework past vulnerabilities. On the other hand, each of these new systems can also lead to new weaknesses or more complex versions of old dysfunctions. For example, an increasing ability to be empathic and take the perspective of others risks a concurrent increase in depression. Studies support the view that the development of social cognition and empathy accompanies risks. For example, empathy has been shown to negatively relate to aggressive behaviour in adolescents, whereas identity and social-cognitive development is in part positively associated with symptoms of depression (Noam, Jilnina, & Young, 2006). The clover model also suggests that adolescents continually manifest each of the proposed different developmental levels and must find ways to balance them all. The clover model, as well as other risk and resiliency developmental frameworks, represents a holistic approach to adolescent development that can be used to plan developmentally informed interventions.

> Thus, from a developmentally informed life skills framework, the key to a successful prevention program for adolescents is to help create the environments and encourage the skills that facilitate their development and resiliency.

SUMMARY

From the theoretical frameworks and exemplary models of life skills development in youth (see tables 2 and 3), it has become clear that despite conceptual differences, life skills frameworks for youth development suggest that all interventions need to provide age-appropriate ways for young people to fulfill their growth potential by improving their mental health, their learning, and their relationships with both adults and peers. On the other hand, this brief review has also shown that the frameworks provide a conceptual background for both research and application. They promise greater collaboration between researchers and practitioners, as well as improvements in developmentally informed intervention programs for youth. It highlights the potential for a new era of developmentally informed life skills intervention for youth. A coherent, rational, and sustainable intervention based on a youth development perspective and incorporating the principles of risk and resilience has tremendous potential for guiding the development of effective interventions (Masten, Burt, & Coatsworth, 2006; Scheithauer, Mati, & Noam, 2009). Although we can draw on a large number of studies on adolescent development published in a wide range of international journals, as well as the resources of the Society for Research in Adolescence (SRA), a systematic integration of developmental theory with intervention practices, as well as the construction of psychometric models and ways to accurately measure how diagnostic information is used (Knight & Zerr, 2010), remains a task for future research.

> EVALUATION EVIDENCE

Developing and implementing effective intervention strategies involve understanding the skills that are the target of the invention. It is also necessary to understand when and how these skills manifest, as well as when and why a given problem behaviour or dysfunction occurs during the course of development. What is the developmentally appropriate way to enhance adolescents' mental health, productivity, and contributions to society? It is clear from the previous discussion that the intervention must be tailored to each adolescent's level of development. It is this skill or competence level that provides the key information on the adolescent's strengths and the social support systems that are necessary for the adolescent to grow and thrive. A mismatch between an adolescent's developmental capacities and a practitioner or program developer's perception of those capacities can have an adverse effect on intervention and/or mentoring programs (Noam & Malti, in press).

> LESSONS LEARNT – IMPLICATIONS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

How do we address the topic of life skills in the monitoring and evaluation of intervention programs? First, any effective program that adopts a developmental perspective to promote life skills must be designed thoughtfully and systematically. Which life skill(s) to pick and which strategies to adopt in designing the intervention are crucial questions that must be answered if a program is to be successful. Thus, it is important to identify and describe the life skills that are essential in the given context and relevant to the issue(s) that will be addressed. It is helpful that the life skills frameworks dis-

cussed in this chapter have a broad enough scope to successfully address a wide range of such issues, including, for example HIV/AIDS prevention, violence prevention, and social exclusion. Different issues and contexts require different life skills.

The questions of the strategic design phase include then, for example, which age groups are to be served and in what context is the program to be implemented. If a life skills intervention is to be effective, it must have an elaborate design that addresses implementation issues and provides concise and realistic methods for monitoring the implementation. Typically, intervention programs assure that all the various settings in which youth development takes place (schools, families, peers, and the community) are involved in the process. It is necessary to demonstrate that the program can work under the proposed preconditions. The program must be able to achieve specified outcomes in feasible, sustainable, and affordable ways in real-world settings (Jensen, Hoagwood, & Trickett 1999). Chapters 2 and 3 discusses in greater depth the steps involved in monitoring, evaluating, and measuring the outcomes of developmentally informed life skills programs for youth.

> SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this chapter, we have outlined an integrated set of specific developmentally adequate abilities that we have labelled "life skills for young people".

► These skills, which everyone needs, are **useful in multiple domains** and always play out in a social context.

► They are **incorporated in developmental frameworks** such as positive youth development and developmental risk and resiliency.

► They are **genuinely strengths-oriented** and conceptualize the role of the child as a partner with adults.

► They emphasize not only **positive behavioural skills, but also the cognitions, emotions, attitudes, and values** that come to the fore in different domains of development (i.e., intrapersonal and interpersonal).

► Most importantly in this connection, they embody the recognition that **certain methods and interventions are most effective at particular ages and levels of development.**

The gap between developmental theory and evidence-based intervention programs, however, is still not completely filled. An important goal for the future is the rigorous implementation of integrative concepts that systematically link developmental theory with prevention practices directed at young people.

What exactly are the challenges for future research and intervention practices in the area of life skills for youth development? Foremost is the increasing social fragmentation that all today's youth's must navigate, wherever they live in the world. Not only does each social context present its own significant challenges, such as

the loss of family structure or widespread bullying in schools, but there is also a lack of coordination between social systems (family, school, peer group) and how they are related to one another (e.g., family with school). This lack of coordination has led to increasing fragmentation, or as some have labelled it, "chaos" (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Despite the efforts of intervention programs, research over the past four decades reveals a progressive decline in concern for the well-being of others – expressed primarily not in words but in actions (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p. 121). This has led authors to conclude that the major developmental challenge of contemporary society lies in the domain of social development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). Life skills include a broad range of competencies in the domain of social development. From a scientific perspective, the systematic integration of developmental theory with intervention practices in the domain of social development is needed to address this challenge.

In planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating developmentally adequate life skills programs that promote health, productivity, and contributions to society, several conceptual, methodological, and practical questions need to be addressed:

► Which life skills should the program aim to promote? This question begs the additional question of whether all, some, or only one of the four life skill dimensions discussed earlier in the chapter (i.e., critical thinking and decision-making, coping and self-management, interpersonal skills and contributions, communication) should be considered in any given intervention program, as well as whether other life skills than proposed here need to be included in research designs.

► What particular characteristics (e.g., age, socio-economic background, national contexts, gender) should define the group(s) of young people to focus on?

► What are the best approaches to creating developmentally informed, culturally sensitive research designs, as well as measurement equivalence across groups and settings (Knight & Zerr, 2010)?

► How can we develop integrative intervention concepts and methods that provide young people with the life skills they need for enhancing their mental health, productivity, and contributions to society?

► How can effective intervention practices be replicated and disseminated in real-world settings?

These questions are at the core of the future agenda for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers in the field of life skills development for young people. Finding answers to these questions is necessary if we are to maximize the potential of our young people and guarantee social cohesion, productivity, and good mental health to future generations. As former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan put it: "A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline."

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CHAPTER 2
MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

BY CLARE HANBURY

> INTRODUCTION

This chapter is for practitioners who do not have scientific training in evaluation. It aims to provide them with the skills and confidence to evaluate their work efficiently and effectively. The guidelines are a collaborative "work in progress" as our understanding develops with its use.

The objectives of this chapter are to:
► clarify what is meant by life skills;
► define and distinguish monitoring and evaluation activities;
► introduce a 12-step planning process for evaluation;
► suggest lists of indicators for evaluating life skills; and
► point to other tools, online links and free resources for further reading.

In volume 2, we provide a toolkit of activities for evaluating life skills with ideas and case studies for recording and analyzing information generated using these tools.

> A DEFINITION

This section looks at some different ways of thinking about life skills and explains the definition and approach we use in these guidelines.

A group of educators created this list in a workshop in response to the question, what are life skills?

Many of these skills can be categorised as:
► technical skills
   (e.g., how to cross a road safely);
► health skills
   (e.g., how to brush your teeth); and
► livelihood skills
   (e.g., time management).

These skills are helpful in life, but they are not what we are referring to as "life skills" in these guidelines. In these guidelines our definition of life skills is as follows:

In these guidelines, we set out fourteen distinctive life skills organised into four categories.

DIMENSIONS OF LIFE SKILLS — Table 4

Dimension	Life skills*
Critical thinking and cognitive skills	Self-reflection; autonomy; flexible, and creative thinking; problem-solving; decision-making.
Coping and self-management	Self-awareness and self-esteem; regulating emotions; managing stress.
Social and moral skills	Social responsibility and cooperativeness; empathy and caring for others; establishing and maintaining relationships; respecting and appreciating others.
Communication	Adequate expression of thoughts and emotions, motives and values; assertiveness.

* Please also refer to chapter 1, page 12

Table 5

Live skills are those abilities that enable young people to deal with their lives in way that is appropriate to their age and experience. These skills support young people to think for themselves, take responsibility for themselves and enable them to make a meaningful contribution to civil society.

An expanded version of and a detailed discussions about this definition and other definitions can be found in chapter 1.

OTHER DEFINITIONS OF LIFE SKILLS

United Nations	**Pan-American Health Organization**	**Wikipedia**	**International Youth Foundation (IYF)**
A large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health.	1) social and interpersonal skills (including communication, refusal skills, assertiveness and empathy; 2) cognitive skills (including decision-making, critical thinking, and self-evaluation), and 3) emotional coping skills (including stress management and increasing an internal locus of control).	The skills necessary for successful living. They can be thought of as falling into six main areas: self, family, job, community, leisure, and spirituality. Essential life skills include such things as being able to recognise and describe one's feelings, giving and receiving feedback, recognising assumptions, setting realistic and attainable goals, and employing problem-solving strategies.	The cognitive, emotional, and social skills needed to make a successful transition from childhood into adulthood. These skills influence the choices young people make and help them become caring, confident, and responsible adults.*
http://www.unicef.org/life skills/index_7308.html	http://www.paho.org/English/HPP/HPF/ADOL/Life skills.pdf	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_skills	http://www.iyfnet.org/document/1139

* The IYF has life skills as part of its Entra21 project. There are many documents online about this project.
This is an evaluation of phase one of the Entra21 in 13 countries in Central and South America.

WHAT IS MEANT BY LIFE SKILLS IN YOUR PROJECT?

> WHAT IS MEANT BY LIFE SKILLS IN YOUR PROJECT?

Each organization working to develop young people's life skills will have their own definition and ways of categorising them. It is important for each project and context to adapt and use what works best in their own culture, context and language.

Here are two examples of additional life skills priorities for two of Jacobs Foundation operational partners:

CASE STUDY

Luta pela Paz (LPP): In working in a favela in Rio de Janeiro, context means everything. Luta pela Paz (LPP) works in the Maré Complex, thus called for comprising 17 low-income communities that are home to close to 135 thousand people, of whom over half are between the ages of 0 and 25. The reality faced by this population is similar to that many of the young people assisted by the projects we know and work with but is exacerbated by the presence of the three narcotraffic factions present in the region as well as police violence. Educational and career opportunities available to them are few and many are school dropouts – whether because they had to seek gainful employment at a very early age or because they failed within a school system that was not designed for their reality or needs.

With the Novos Caminhos project, LPP has sought to take these youths back to the classroom, certify them with lower and high school degrees and then prepare them for and introduce them into the job market. No matter how thorough the project may be, however, it must count on a unique life skill that in any other context might taken for granted: perseverance. The program may, expectedly and quite explicitly, teach its beneficiaries problem-solving and communication techniques, only to name a few vital life skills, but for youths who have already failed in the classroom once and who have been away from it for up to five years, perseverance is key. Creating indicators to measure a youth's capacity to stick with the program, to continue on to its next levels until they reach the job market is crucial in a context in which the most basic issues of survival are constantly presented to them – questions as fundamental as: "Will I be alive next year?"

"In our project, it is crucial that youths persevere with the program and continue on to its next levels until they reach the job market. This is vital in a context where violence is a constant threat."

Gabriela Pinheiro, Luta pela Paz

"In contexts where politics is equivalent to corruption, it is necessary to recuperate a political understanding that focuses on public service and public good. Not only for the persons that are professionally involved in politics, but for every citizen."

Workshop participants, Zurich 2010

CASE STUDY

Save the Children West Africa Region and **Swiss Contact in Burkina Faso,** work with maginalised children and youngsters who are susceptive to migrate or who are already "on the move". A top priority for this program is to develop "affirmation de soi" (self-affirmation). This life skill includes elements of others listed above.

As they move, children and youth encounter various risks such as exploitation, trafficking, abuse, etc. In the phase of re-integration they are confronted with difficulties such as: lack of knowledge of the local labour market, lack of skills and qualifications. We try to develop in them the skills of "affirmation de soi" (self-affirmation). We find that this:

► Helps to protect themselves against abuse
► Develops their ability to resist pressure from peers to leave the project
  and stand up for their point of view for example the decision to stay with a projects or
  to chose a professional path.
► To show self-confidence concerning the options s/he takes for her/his protection
  and to be able to stick to a decision.
► This skill goes beyond self esteem and self confidence. It shows elements of determination,
  courage and perseverance.

Enyo Gbedemah, Save the Children Sweden, Senegal and Amsatou Salambere, Swiss Contact, Burkina Faso

YOUR DEFINITION

Before planning to evaluate life skills, ensure that all stakeholders in the project have shared understanding of what "life skills" are and what is being developed in a life skills project. This will help to clarify an understanding of the purpose of the evaluation.

The definition may vary between contexts and may also be an issue of language.

For example in the workshop with Jacobs Foundation's field partners, one group highlighted "**political responsibility**" as a distinct "life skill" while others regarded it as an outcome of developing several related life skills such as the one listed above as life skill # 9, "Social Responsibility and Cooperativeness". What the specific group meant by political responsibility included:

► recuperating a political/collective dimension of oneself and ones role in society; and
► recognizing oneself as related to organizations and institutions responsible for the public good.

They felt that the skill of Social Responsibility and Cooperativeness did not capture the intention and need to challenge the status quo in certain political contexts.

Other outcomes of life skills projects for young people mentioned by the group included:
► to be less violent;
► to get a formal education;
► to enter the job market;
► to protect themselves and their peers;
► to make safe healthy choices; and
► to help young people change their reality.

> MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS

This section clarifies what is monitoring and evaluation and what are indicators for life skills. It then sets out a 12-step process to plan the monitoring and evaluation of a life skills project. Examples are set out where relevant for each of the steps and the section concludes with a sample monitoring and evaluation plan.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PROJECT PLANNING

Evaluation is sometimes conducted as "afterthought" or as something to add to the end of a project. However, good evaluations are a powerful feature of the earliest stages of overall project planning and design. This leads to adequate time and resources being allocated. Evaluation activity must start right at the beginning of a project to establish a baseline to measure change. Evaluation needs information gathered by ongoing monitoring. Therefore, time and resources need to be allocated for monitoring activities throughout the projects life. Instead of monitoring and evaluation activity being a part of a projects plan, think of it being at the heart of the plan, and at the heart of the planning process. For further information, see the Jacobs Foundation guidelines on project planning (www.jacobsfoundation.org).

MONITORING

Monitoring is about tracking a project's achievement of expected interim and final results (milestones) along the way. It is about the ongoing gathering of information and therefore an important part of evaluation. At the start of the project, you have to ask yourself: What do you want to achieve and when? What do you want to keep track of and why? Then you need to ask how and who will do this and when.

For example, at its most simple, taking a register of attendance at a life skills session is monitoring. Slightly more advanced would be to ask participants a question or a number of questions before and after the session and record their answers or have a show of hands about what (or how) the participants have learnt. This gives you an idea of whether your key messages are being understood. This is monitoring.

Monitoring happens throughout the life of a project. For example, there may be a project that takes place over the course of one year and features life skills sessions conducted each week. Monitoring is about understanding what is happening in those weekly sessions and how it is happening. This information gathered is useful to and "feeds" evaluation.

Monitoring is therefore a part of the basic project activity and is usually conducted by the project staff.

Regular monitoring enables project staff to learn and to feed that learning back into their approach and activities on an ongoing basis.

Please refer to Appendix 2 "Further resources" on page 56 ff. for more detailed input on monitoring.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is also about asking questions and finding out about aspects of a project's progress, achievements and results. There are five specific criteria that are commonly used within the field: reference chapter 3, page 66, for more detailed information.

► Relevance (our project is what the people we work with need)
► Efficiency (we are using all the resources we have to the best of our ability, e.g., time, skills, funding, etc.)
► Effectiveness (we are doing what we said we would)
► Sustainability (what we are doing can keep going); and
► Impact (what the project is doing is making changes)

EFFECTIVE

► Is the project achieving its aims and objectives?
► Is our project having the intended effect on behaviour?
► Where have we done well/need to improve?
► Could we expect to find similar changes in a larger project?

EFFICIENT

► Is what it is achieving being done in the best way possible?
► Do the people involved enjoy the program? Why/Why not?
► Does the project fit well with the time, budget, people available?

An important task for field offices is to think about what you want to focus on (it might be one or more of these criteria) and think about the type of questions you need to ask. Here are examples of questions to ask to assess effectiveness and efficiency.

Evaluation is always an intense project activity requiring careful planning, thinking and time. It can be done by internal staff or external consultants. There are different levels of evaluation and it is important to decide what "level" is right for you. This should depend on what you want to find out and on the time and resources the project can allocate to it.

At an internal field level and when staff are learning how to do evaluation, it is important not to do too much. Select what you want to focus your evaluation effort on carefully. It is much better to focus in depth on one question than to take on many questions before you. When you do focus in depth on a narrow focus, often other questions get answered, too.

These guidelines are designed to support your **internal project monitoring and evaluation activities** and the goal of this level of evaluation should be simple – to help you and your project! The process requires you to clearly define your questions, choose the right indicators, pick the right tools, and analyze the resulting data.

Your project evaluations should share similar standards and characteristics of external evaluations and research. However, internal project evaluations will have a narrower focus, take less time and be simpler in design. They provide insights about the specifics of your own project. The results, and even the methods, can be used by further work on your project or overall program by external evaluators and researchers.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS

A more detailed discussion on the purposes of reliable evaluation and an in-depth review of rigorous impact evaluations of life skills programs for young people can be found in chapter 3.

Evaluations are usually set up at the beginning of the project to get a starting point or "baseline". This is about collecting data that you will be evaluating later. It is only by collecting information at the beginning that you can ensure the project is having an effect over and above what you might expect developmentally or for other reasons. A good baseline survey strengthens the power of evaluation considerably.

Evaluations are then conducted in the middle of the life of the project (mid-term) and at the end (final evaluation). It is also useful to do some evaluative activity between the time when the project was planned and when it actually begins. This enables you to consider if anything in the plan needs to change.

INDICATORS OF LIFE SKILLS

Indicators for life skills are the characteristics of the skill that you will be examining in your monitoring and evaluation activities. Before monitoring and evaluating a life skill, it is important to clarify what you mean by it and check that this meaning is shared by all those involved in implementing the life skills activities, including those involved in monitoring and evaluation. Being clear about the indicators also helps to identify the best tools to use. On the next pages, we set out suggestions for indicators of each of the 14 universal life skills. These lists clarify what we mean by each life skill. They are set out for readers to adopt or adapt and to inspire the development of new indicators.

IDEAS FOR MAIN INDICATORS OF LIFE SKILLS	
CRITICAL THINKING AND DECISION-MAKING	**INDICATORS**
1 Self-reflection	► Thinks about how to undertake a task ► Reflects on own confidence and competence ► Reflects on own strengths and qualities ► Able to stop and think before taking action ► Thinks before blaming others for things that go wrong
2 Autonomy	► Makes an informed decision that is specifically relevant to own situation and that may be against the tide ► Able to make decisions independently from adults ► The right decision for oneself is automatic
3 Flexible and creative thinking (the ability to develop new ideas and/or solutions)	► Demonstrates "out of the box" thinking ► Has unexpected/original/new ideas for solving problems ► To be able to create a vision and to project oneself into the future
4 Problem-solving	► Finds a sensible, fair solution quickly ► Suggest options ► Is open to new ideas ► Can distinguish needs and wants ► Considers different sides to a problem (pros and cons)
5 Decision-making (the ability to gather information and assess options in order to make informed choices)	► Balances the risks/benefits of a course of action ► Supports a decision with evidence and strong arguments ► Listens effectively
COPING AND SELF MANAGEMENT	**INDICATORS**
6 Self-awareness and self-esteem (to believe in one's abilities, accept one's weaknesses, and respect one's own background)	► Can describe themselves in positive terms ► Can identify and describe a positive achievement ► Can describe things that can realistically be changed in oneself, such as abilities, learning new things, developing better interpersonal skills, etc. ► Can set and achieve goals and show accountability for one's actions
7 Regulating emotions (deal with one's feelings and to express them in a responsible manner)	► Able to react in a positive way when things go right/wrong ► Able to understand own emotions and the emotions of others ► Can calm down quickly after an emotionally intense experience/situation
8 Managing stress	► Has an awareness of how we physically respond to stress ► Has ideas about how to cope with stress ► Knows what stress is

MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND MAKING A CONTRIBUTION	INDICATORS
9 Social responsibility and cooperativeness	► Takes on tasks to help the community ► Helps others at a cost to oneself (time, money, hardship) ► Able to give and accept others' gifts (even time) ► Works with others to achieve a common goal and to compromise when needed
10 Empathy	► Able to understand other's feelings and thoughts ► Feels with another's feelings ► Able to express why helping others is important ► Finds satisfaction in helping others
11 Establishing and maintaining relationships	► Has and can describe a network of important relationships ► Able to draw a coherent relationship chart/constellation ► Can articulate what a relationship is ► Can describe characteristics of different types of relationships ► Can describe what is needed to maintain a relationship ► Can appreciate the ups and downs of relationships
12 Respects and appreciates others	► Can describe the importance of others in their life and why these others are important ► Able to respond sympathetically and thoughtfully to a story about a friend being sick ► Respects others opinions even when different from own
COMMUNICATION (the ability to express oneself effectively, understand others and respond to different people in different situations)	INDICATORS
13 Expression of thoughts, emotions, and motives/values	► Has a vocabulary for feelings and thoughts ► Can express oneself in a variety of ways (art, music, poetry, etc.) ► Behaves cooperatively in a group ► Asks thought-provoking questions
14 Assertiveness	► Able to talk about the roles, responsibilities and drawbacks of own gender in a way that shows strength and pride ► Responds to a provocative question with own views, ideas and confidence ► Able to express own ideas and perspectives even when different from ones own

DEVELOPING NEW LIFE SKILLS AND INDICATORS

When planning to monitor and/or evaluate a life skill (or cluster of life skills), select the indicators relevant to it and/or adapt others and/or develop new indicators. It is important to develop indicators for life skills that are particular to and relevant for a specific project, culture, context and language.

For example, the skill of critical thinking in some projects needs to connect to:

1. Young people's abilities to transform a context which is marked by inequality and exclusion; and

2. Young people's abilities to construct new knowledge on the basis of the data that reality offers us and to propose ways for its transformation.

Key indicators for these programs would therefore be linked to these two points and further clarity at local level would be needed on what is meant by "transformation". Suggestions for indicators of a young person's critical thinking in this context might include:

► the ability to analyze a problem from different perspectives;
► the ability to discriminate causes that contribute to a problem from causes that do not contribute to a problem; and
► the ability to relate one problem to another with the same underlying causes.

In our contexts, it would not be enough to develop young people's capacities for reflection, autonomy or creativity. It is necessary that these skills have an impact on the transformation of the living conditions of those participating in a specific intervention. To make that happen, young people need to be able to analyze the reality of their lives from different perspective.

A group of project managers from Latin American countries, Workshop, Zurich, July 2010

MONITORING AND EVALUATING LIFE SKILLS

Life skills projects that focus on the development of political responsibility, might consider the following indicators relevant for their evaluation:

► Young people feel a sense of belonging to the community;

► Young people know about the services and organizations that exist to help their community;

► Young people are able to analyze and identify existing power relations in the community; and

► Young people are able to plan actions that contribute to changing the community.

What projects find is that the process of developing indicators helps those involved become clearer and develop a shared idea on what they want to achieve from a specific project or intervention.

Other ideas for relevant life skills and suggested indicators are set out in the table below:

FURTHER EXAMPLES FROM PROJECT-BASED LIFE SKILLS INDICATORS

	PROJECT-BASED LIFE SKILL	INDICATORS
1	Self-affirmation	► Resist pressure to participate in risky behaviour such as taking drugs, consuming alcohol and prostitution ► Able to defend/stand for their point of view such as a decision to stay or move on
2	Perseverance	► Academic progress in class ► Ability to overcome obstacles ► Staying with the project until a goal is achieved
3	Ability to see one's self beyond current situation	► Articulate and act upon plans to build a better future ► Interest in professional/technical training ► Have and can describe positive role models

> THE 12 STEPS TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF A LIFE SKILLS PROJECT

Monitoring and evaluation has various levels of complexity but all good project evaluations share similar characteristics. In these guidelines, we have set out 12 steps for planning and implementing your project evaluation. In practice, the steps may not always flow from one to another.

There will be some movement backwards and forwards and there may be a need to add to, take away from or change the order of steps. Each evaluation works differently as each evaluation and each project has its own unique purpose. The crucial thing is to plan evaluations which are useful, enjoyable and realistic given the amount of time and resources for the project and the expertise of those involved. Where it is helpful, an example is set out in shaded boxes below the general points for each step.

STEP ONE
> PURPOSE

An evaluation needs clear aims and objectives. What and who is the evaluation for? What is the **PURPOSE** of the evaluation? Discuss the overall aims and objectives of the project itself and think what aspect of the project needs to be evaluated. To understand and clarify the purpose of the evaluation in relation to the whole project is key. Sometimes, you may want to look at broad issues and, at other times, smaller or more limited ones. The choice should be based on what you need to learn.

EXAMPLE

The purpose of the evaluation is to find out if and how our one-year community leadership program for young people has developed the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become an effective young community leader.

STEP TWO
> KEY QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of the evaluation will then lead to the specific **KEY QUESTIONS** that need answering to achieve the purpose(s) of the evaluation.

EXAMPLE

Is our leadership program creating community leaders?

What are the most effective features of our leadership program and why are they effective?

Are the participants in our leadership program taking on leadership roles in the community?

These different questions focus on the WHAT'S, the HOW'S and the IMPACT respectively.

STEP THREE
> **SELECT THE INDICATORS**

To answer these evaluation questions, we need to work out what makes up an effective community leader or an effective leadership program. These are probably in our original planning documents. They are called INDICA-TORS, i.e., the x that demonstrates or is able to measure that y is the case (see page 30 ff. for further general information on indicators).

EXAMPLE

► Body temperature is an indicator of health

► Hours and minutes are an indicator of time

► Exam results are an indicator of progress at school

► Being able to speak clearly and in a focussed way on behalf of others might be an indicator of leadership

It is important that the indicators are directly related to the activities of your project. Sets of indicators have been suggested for each of our 14 universal life skills on page 31–32. Defining indicators can help to clarify other aspects of the project too as noted in this example.

EXAMPLE

"I learnt that defining indicators at the planning stage meant that there was greater coherence in the design of the pedagogic approach to use when implementing the life skills activity as well as the design of the evaluation. The evaluation activities need to be carefully focused on testing the achievement of the indicators and this includes any questions in a discussion that ask the participants to reflect. It is also important to understand and then create a matrix to help you identify where the young people are on a continuum as they will not all be at the same level. You need to be able to understand this and understand their progress. It is important to inform young people how and when they will be evaluated as this encourages greater responsibility in the learning process. The evaluation itself will develop their awareness of the progress they make."

Olga Vazquez, Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi, El Salvador

The design and use of indicators varies depending on the purpose of the evaluation. When carrying out evaluation with young people, it may be relevant to involve them in the selection or development of the indicators themselves. An example of this is in the case study from Fútbol con Corazón in Volume 2, The Toolkit, page 8. Some tools do not require a predetermined set of indicators such as the "most significant story method" in Volume 2, The Toolkit, page 38 ff. However, this tool does require a clear sense of a key question.

It can be useful for you to divide your indicators into those you can count easily (quantitative indicators) and those that require interpretation (qualitative) such as in this case study from Aflatoun below.

EXAMPLE

Indicators of young people's social and financial enterprise include (Aflatoun Training Manual*)

Quantitative indicators (countable)
► Revenue generated from the projects per class/school
► Number of social and financial projects successfully implemented
► Number of activities in which children participate
► Number of children participating in community-based and social projects and activities

Qualitative indicators (interpreted)
► Willingness and ability to cooperate/work in a team
► Children's ability to plan and implement a project
► Children enthusiastic about community participation
► Decision-making and problem-solving skills

* http://www.aflatoun.org/downloads/aflatounevaluationmanual.pdf

Note that in this example the qualitative indicators include "life skills". When designing evaluation activity to test this indicator, it may be useful to further unpack these indicators to establish a shared understanding about what is meant by "problem-solving" and decision-making.

EXAMPLE

Indicators for monitoring and evaluating leadership could include:
► A young person shows an ability to speak clearly and in a focussed way on behalf of others.
► A young person is able to articulate, plan and organize others to help reach a specific goal.
► A young person is being described as a "leader" by friends and family.

These are indicators that can both be counted and described.

One of our partners, Aflatoun, created a visual summary of these first three steps:

Purpose
► Effectiveness; learning and efficiency

Questions
► States what you want to learn.
► Gives direction to an evaluation.
► Helps you make decisions about other aspects of the evaluation.
► Must be something that you can realistically measure.

Indicators
► A variable (something that can be measured) that is able to demonstrate that a particular activity has happened or a change has occurring.
► Must directly relate to the question asked.

THE 12 STEPS

STEP FOUR
> TOOLS

When the indicators are selected (adopted, adapted or developed), the next decision to make is how to test or measure the indicator and when to do this. This will be done using monitoring and evaluation TOOL(S). For much more detail on types of tools, examples of evaluation activities and case studies on how projects have used them to evaluate selected life skills projects, turn to volume 2/The Toolkit. Here is a summary for the purposes of understanding how this part of the planning process fits with the other steps.

The types of information we gather falls into three categories each of which has different types of tools:

► Information we SEE
  – from observing changes
  OBSERVATIONS (O)
► Information we READ
  – like registers of attendance, responses to questions on a survey or questionnaire
  DOCUMENTS (D).
► Information we HEAR
  – from questions we pose in different types of interviews and discussions
  DISCUSSIONS (D); and

If you have the capacity, test the indicator (or group of indicators) using more than one type of tool. When each tool generates similar results, we can feel confident in our conclusions.

Using three tools to test an indicator is called TRIANGULATION. It does not necessary involve generating information in three separate categories but using the **"ODD"** framework can be a straightforward planning framework.

TOOLS in each of the three categories (ODD) can be: **highly structured** and the information gathered can be counted easily or measured. For example, information generated from some documents like registers, questionnaires, observation schedules and even some interviews. Easily countable or measurable information is described as QUANTITATIVE.

When the tool is **less structured,** the data generated needs careful assembly, cleaning, organization and analysis. Interpretation is usually needed and the person doing the analysis needs to use their intuition. These types of tools are often described as QUALITATIVE.

In evaluation, the use of both QUANTITATIVE and QUALITATIVE tools is important. There are also many ways to combine quantitative and qualitative tools.

As it is the specific design of an evaluation tool that is important, it is useful to try out the tool to make sure it generates the kind of information you hope and predict. This is called PILOT TESTING. It is especially important to pilot test a questionnaire that has to be translated. It is worth taking the time to design your tool well as it saves time later. However, making mistakes in selecting what questions to ask and how to ask them is common and is part of the learning! It is always worth factoring in time to pilot, to make mistakes and to learn.

EXAMPLE
To apply the ODD tools planning framework to our example on leadership, a range of monitoring and evaluation activities can be used:

Monitoring activities can include:

► Recording attendance noting names and the sessions that were attended/missed (D)

► Observation schedule grading 1–5 in terms of making contributions in the group where 5 is the highest/best (O)

► Notes from journal about things that have been said informally by young people over the course of the project/this phase of the project (D)

Evaluation activities can include:

A) Testing the indicator: A young person is able to articulate, plan and organize others to help reach a specific goal.
By setting young people a specific group task and, using a recording system, observing how well the young people cope with the task within a given time frame, how you know and observe who takes on which role.
An example of a task could be to:
Identify a health-related problem that is in your family or community. Design a solution that you and your friends can undertake or contribute to in the next six months. Develop a plan of action and begin your project. If this is logistically too complex a task to put into practice, the task could involve just creating a plan (O, D).

B) Testing the indicator: A young person shows an ability to speak clearly and in a focused way on behalf of others.
By requiring young people to make a verbal report on their leadership task (or progress towards it) (O, D).

C) Testing the indicator: A young person describes themselves and/or others as a "leader" by friends and family.
By using a two-question written or verbal survey tool administered to a randomly selected group of young people and to their families in which they are asked to choose 1–3 words that most accurately describes their young person. Among these words could be options such as leader, decision-maker, helper, designer, thinker, worker, student, etc. The second question would ask the respondent to answer why they selected this/these words (O, D, D).

Please note that if this is the first time your team has been involved in evaluation, design activities that fit with what you want to find out, the skills of the team and the time available for planning, implementation, analysis and follow up. Even asking a few closed-ended questions will give you some insights.

STEP FIVE
> **RECORD**

The next step is to plan how to **RECORD** the information for evaluation and monitoring.

For questionnaires, this is part of the design and participants in the evaluation provide information by making choices, or prioritize choices or give one or more predictable answers. This can be easily recorded using a computer program like Excel or having a record sheet where responses can be collected, counted and then analyzed. There is sometimes scope in a questionnaire design to ask more open questions.

When conducting a discussion or activity in which life skills are to be tested, observed or articulated, plan carefully how to record the information. Recording must be done immediately. The surveyors must not rely on memory. The more qualitative tools tend to generate more information than is needed. It is important to remember the purpose and record the information to meet the purpose. It is also useful to be open to the unexpected and build in a way to record and report these.

Also, consider the place there might be in your project for:
► the collection and recording of data from informal encounters as the project is ongoing and during the formal evaluation phase; and
► the use of any data collected from monitoring activities.

EXAMPLE

1. Recording information generated by on-going monitoring activities
► Recording attendance noting names and the sessions that were attended/missed
► Reasons for missed attendance
► Observation schedule grading 1–5 in terms of making contributions in the group where 5 is the highest/best
► Notes from journal about things that have been said informally by young people over the course of the project/this phase of the project.

TESTING THE INDICATOR

Template 1

A young person is able to articulate, plan and organize others to help reach a specific goal

Names/numbers of ten young people selected from the three project groups	Description of the task and time frame	Role they played in the group	How well they did in the task. A score between 1 and 5 plus how you know (Comments)	Other (e.g., testimonials from the young person)

2. Recording information generated by evaluation task 1 on leadership

3. Recording information generated by evaluation task 2 on leadership, testing the indicator: A young person shows an ability to speak clearly and in a focused way on behalf of others…

Record data from the verbal report, develop a list of characteristics in the story that demonstrated leadership for you. These might be:

► The audience wants to listen (charisma).
► The speaker gives you confidence (authority and inspiration).
► The story makes sense (logical).
► The plan is realistic and doable.

If it is useful to make comparisons between the young people, develop a scale from 1–5 where 1=adequate and 5=outstanding. Young people themselves can be involved in the scoring.

4. Recording information generated by evaluation task 3 on leadership.

TESTING THE INDICATOR	Template 2

A young person describes themselves and/or others as a "leader" by friends and family indicators

Name:	Age:	Gender:

1. Choose and write or report 1–3 words that most accurately describes you.
Leader, decision-maker, helper, designer, thinker, worker, student (or use others that you think describe you)

2. Write or report why you selected this/these words.

Name	1–3 words that best describe him/her	Reasons for this selection

Name:	Age:	Gender:

1. Choose and write or report 1–3 words that most accurately describes your son/daughter/friend:
Leader, decision-maker, helper, designer, thinker, worker, student (or use others that you think describes them)

2. Write or report why you selected this/these words.

Name	1–3 words that best describe him/her	Reasons for this selection

STEP SIX
> **SAMPLE**

This step is about selecting the participants in the evaluation. This decision may have been made earlier when discussing the purpose of the evaluation. You may be conducting monitoring activities on the larger group for example, 100 young people on a leadership program but you only have the time and capacity to conduct formal, structured in-depth evaluation activities with a small group, for example 10% or 10 young leaders.

In research, this group is called the SAMPLE and a lot of importance is given to ensuring those who participate in the research are a REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE of the groups your project aims to benefit (or impact – if the two are different). This means the young people whose life skills are representative of the group your project aims to reach. Unless there is a specific reason to do so, don't pick out all the young people doing well or all those who are finding the project challenging. This is called BIAS.

To avoid bias you can use simple methods like giving each person in the group you want to evaluate a number and picking numbers out of the hat. Or asking someone to use a sequence to select names from the list – such as every 3rd name up to the number you want in your sample. When you need a sample, create a method that suits your project ensuring there is no bias.

Alternatively, plan to gather information from a bigger group and then use information only from a smaller percentage of the group. This works well with paper-based information gathering like questionnaires or the more qualitative draw and write tool (see volume 2, The Toolkit, for more examples and tools).

As most of those whose life skills you will be evaluating are young people, there are additional and important ethical issues to consider such as safety, openness and usefulness of the evaluation's purpose for the young people, emotional support, informed consent and relationships with the adult evaluators. Before conducting evaluations involving young people, it is useful for all adults involved to examine your organization's Child Protection Policy. If there is no policy in place then developing one and training staff on child protection needs to be done first. Further resources on the ethics of consulting children and young people can be found in the appendix.

Other considerations relevant to the choice of group include the scheduling and logistics for both the participants who will make up the SAMPLE and those who will be conducting the evaluation.

STEP SEVEN
> TRAIN

The next consideration is to select, brief and if relevant TRAIN those individuals who will conduct the evaluation activities. These people are sometimes called the SURVEYOR(S). Use this label cautiously as a surveyor may be doing far more than administering a survey. When using focus groups and other types of creative activities the surveyor need good facilitation skills. It is useful if those involved in the collection of the data are different to those involved in data analysis.

Monitoring activities are part of good practice and done by project staff. Evaluation activities are distinctive. They can be conducted by project staff but their role as surveyors requires preparation.

Be aware of the effect that the specific relationship between the surveyors and those being evaluated can have on the results, especially where the evaluation tools include open discussion. This may be especially important when a manager is evaluating his or her employees or a teacher evaluating his or her students. Tools that provide participants with anonymity and confidentiality may be one solution or using a surveyor who guarantees confidentiality and whose status is neutral. The choice of surveyor depends on the purpose of the evaluation.

If the activities are administered or facilitated by more than one person, the team needs TRAINING so that they administer the activity in the same way. If one surveyor facilitates the evaluation activities in a different way to another then the results may not be the result of the questions or tasks that have been designed but be linked to the way in which the evaluation was conducted. If a number of surveyors are involved and they have a range of experience and skills then it can be useful to provide them with a script to follow. The meaning of questions can change according to the cadence of our speech! Say these three sentences out loud:

► What do YOU think of yourself as a community leader?
► What do you think of yourself as a COMMUNITY leader?
► What do you think of yourself as a community LEADER?

Notice how placing the emphasis on the different words changes the meaning of the question! Each question with the same words and said in a different way provokes a different answer. In your project evaluation, it may be essential that the questions are asked using the same words and asked in the same way or using the same cadence. This requires awareness raising, training and practice for the surveyors doing the evaluation.

Surveyors need to practice the administration of the evaluation plus how they will introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the evaluation. As before, whenever young people are involved, there are ethical considerations (see Appendix 1, page 54 ff.).

STEP EIGHT
> **CONDUCT MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**

This step is to implement the monitoring and evaluation activities planned using the tools and recording the information you have designed.

STEP NINE
> **ASSEMBLE, CLEAN AND ORGANIZE INFORMATION GATHERED**

This step is about turning information that has been gathered during monitoring and evaluation into DATA in preparation for DATA ANALYSIS. The information will need to be ASSEMBLED, CLEANED and then ORGANIZED.

ASSEMBLING is about putting all the information from the variety of sources together, from evaluation and monitoring, reading it, looking at it, listening to it and getting an overview of what you have. It is useful to do this with someone else so you can discuss it.

CLEANING information is about removing information or sets of information. For example – maybe a question was not translated correctly or maybe one group being evaluated were asked to do the activity differently to the majority of the groups and the results from this group look "wrong".

ORGANIZING information is about reformatting information and/or putting information sets together ready to be compared or counted. The information gathered may test more than one indicator or more than one aspect of this indicator. The information may be recorded in different ways and in different places. There may be:
► notes on or filled tick boxes on an observation schedule;
► notes or an audio recording of/notes from a focus group discussion;
► photos or videos;
► Information from different sections of a questionnaire;
► information from different questionnaires; or
► notes taken in an interview.

It may be useful (depending again on your purpose) to organize all the information about one indicator or groups of indicators together in one place. This might be a simple matter of cutting and pasting information or dividing parts of a questionnaire into two or more places.

If the evaluation is taking place at the beginning or half way through a project and will be repeated, consider if you need to clearly identify data back to particular individuals or groups so that when it is done again, the changes can be noted and verified

If you need to identify the different bits of information, do this as you organize it. You might use a name or a CODE. CODES are useful if anonymity is useful or important for confidentiality. If you are separating different bits of information, remember to identify them all later so the information can be reassembled and used again.

Do not forget to include relevant information generated by those monitoring the project.

EXAMPLE[3]

In our project to evaluate leadership, information can be assembled in the following way:

Data from the monitoring activities:
Number of young people in the leadership program = 100

Record of attendance for each young person: 64 young people attended all 12 of the leadership sessions (768)
► 5 young people missed 6 sessions (30)
► 10 missed 3 sessions (30)
► 6 missed 2 sessions (12)
► 5 missed 1 session (5)
► Total missed sessions (77 sessions)

[3] Data for this leadership data analysis task has been drawn from a number of sources.

Reasons given included: illness (16 times), work (10), family illness (20 times), boredom with the program (3 times)

Contribution to discussions (observation schedules):
► 30 young people average score of 4.5
► 26 young people average score of 3
► 40 young people average score of 2.5
► 4 young people average score of 1

Samples of relevant monitoring notes about the leadership program from the facilitator's journal:
► P wanted the program to be on another day as it clashed with a family activity he has to do
► X said that the program was helping him to communicate better with his older bother
► Y said that she helped her mum to calm down after an argument with a neighbour and she would not be able to do this before the program

Selected data from evaluation activity 1
(a leadership task)
► Ten names linked to numbers coded so the numbers are traceable back to the individuals)
► Description of the leadership task and time frame they were involved with

Group 1: Fund-raising for 22 new sports shirts for the club. Over one month.
Group 2: Helping the clinic by doing a campaign to get 100 young children to the clinic for immunization. Over one month and full time on immunization day.
Group 3: Setting up and running a football club for young children in the school holidays.

Role they played in the group (most young people played more than one role)
► Note takers (6)
► Spokespeople (10)
► Planners (3)
► Peacemakers (5)

How well they did in the task (where relevant, the names of the young people have been replaced with letters)

Four of the ten young people (A, H, I and J) all achieved a 5 in the task. They showed leadership throughout the task, they were well organized, they motivated others and remembered to evaluate their group activity too. H remarked he gained respect and self respect from the activity.

Five of the young people scored 3. They participated well but were following rather than leading most of the time. C came to the program barely communicating and with very low confidence – to score 3 means a lot to her. B has shown little interest (1). The attendance is good but further work needs to be done to identify underlying problems.

We did a baseline on this scoring before and after the task as some of the highest scoring young people were high scoring before they started the program. Three of the young people in the programme progressed 3 points, six progressed 2 points, one moved from 0–1 point.

Other (e.g., testimonials from the young person)
(D) I am going to continue at school. This project has given me self belief. I want to be a leader now and I need qualifications so people take me seriously.
(C) I will not leave school to marry. I will carry on with my schooling and get married later.
(E) This project has made me realize I am not a leader, I am a planner.

Selected data from evaluation activity 2
(a verbal report on the leadership task)

Scoring and notes on verbal report
► Charisma 3/10
► Authority 4/10 and inspiration 3/10
► Logical structure 7/10
► A realistic and manageable plan that they were able to articulate clearly 8/10

Selected data from evaluation activity 3
(self assessment – words and on words leadership task)

The words they chose to use about themselves: Leader (8), boss (5), organized (3), liked (1), kind (4), looked out for others (3), responsible (6), a planner, not a leader (3), like working with leaders (1).

The reasons why you selected this/these words: Had followers (6), listened to, families relied on them to do things (3), felt they had something to give a team (2), team members said they were good at planning (3), had some good friends (7), getting on with everyone in the family (1), feel like a man (1).

The words chosen by a family member or friend: Helpful (10), responsible (9), much better than before (3), changed (8), a role model (4), better for his future (3), polite (7), not arguing any more (2).

The reasons why you selected this/these words: Because this is what I observed (8), I feel/noticed this (4), she has taken action (3).

Noting where the words tied together:
Responsible and looked after others.

STEP TEN
> ANALYZE

Once the information has been assembled, cleaned and organized, it is now DATA. The penultimate step in planning your evaluation is to consider how you will ANALYZE the data. You need to remind yourselves of the PURPOSE of the evaluation. There is nearly always more data generated in the monitoring and evaluation activities than you need. So be clear on what you do need and stick to this! If possible, give yourself the scope to look for the unexpected too.

The same data can be analyzed in many different ways and at different levels of complexity. How you do it is linked to the time you have available and the purpose of the evaluation. Remember if you have good data which is well organized you can go back to it and analyze it more deeply and for different purposes later when you have more time!

Here are some simple steps to use to undertake data analysis. There are many ways to do it and so this is not THE way but it is A way to bring together and understand and explain data. If your project or organization already has set out a way to do this then use the methods that are familiar.

1. Remind yourself of the aims of the evaluation and the **objectives** of the specific activity that generated the data you will analyze.

2. Get familiar with the data to begin the process of abstraction and conceptualization:
► read documents, study observational notes, listen to tapes (where relevant), etc.
► list key themes and subthemes that are coming up
► start to look for consistencies, inconsistencies and other patterns.
► making notes of anything else of relevance, e.g., mood of participants, atmosphere, etc.

3. Create a chart (sometimes called a thematic framework) that sets out the issues arising from the themes you have noted and the subthemes.

4. Using the **themes and subthemes** to guide you, look again at the details of the data. Undertake the following types of **data analysis activities.** Select the activities that are relevant to the type of data you have. Start with what feels simple and build from there.
► Enter data that can be easily COUNTED into a simple data analysis tool, like excel or, if the numbers are low enough, create a spreadsheet and enter data by hand.
► Examine relevant documents, observation schedules and any other part of the evaluation activity that used a scoring and add to the numeric data where relevant.
► Calculate percentages, frequencies and/or averages.
► From discussion-based activity, identify the most frequently used ideas, words or phrases.
► Give headings or "labels" to each category of data within the themes of subthemes.
► Collect all the data you have under headings.
► Develop a conclusion or write statements about each heading (this might be a mix of what has been counted and/or what has been said in discussions, what you have red in documents and/or what you have observed).
► If relevant, note the amount of data you have for each heading as this could be important too.
► Pick out any powerful statements which are either characteristic of what you have found, or that note any extra unexpected information.
► Insert the data (or notes about the data) in the third column. You can put into the chart the qualitative data AND the quantitative data. This is sometimes called charting.

5. Make a note of the frequency of the data (how often a piece of information occurs or is said). You can colour code the notes or make a coloured dot beside each piece of data to show where the data came from (if you have different sources). This part of the process is sometimes called **indexing.** Here is an example of the headings for a simple chart to use for data analysis. This is intended as a guide for you to adapt to the needs of your evaluation.

DATA ANALYSIS WORK TABLE   Template 3

Subject of the analysis:

Aim of evaluation:

Evaluation objectives:

Key themes	Subthemes	Data from all sources on the subthemes (colour code according to the source e.g. interviews, surveys, obsevations)	Frequency/Scale/ What can be counted about these subthemes	Other notes including powerful things that were said

EXAMPLE
In our project to evaluate leadership, we might analyze the results in the following way

► Count the numbers of young people involved
► Making a percentage of attendance and non-attendance with reasons given why some young people did not attend
► Assessing the scope and scale of the task designed by the young people, sampled in the activity
► Counting the overall scores for achievement
► Measuring the progress score and comparing the two

► Describe the leadership task and time frame they were involved with
► List the role they played in the groups
► Look at the scoring in how well they did in the task and the evidence on how you know
► Note the things that were said by the young people
► Look at the scoring on verbal report
► The words they chose to use about themselves and that others chose to say about them

6. The next step and the one which is the most difficult to describe is where you **interpret the data.** This process is about looking for patterns, connections, links and explanations. You search for a structure to explain what you have found. It is not a mechanical step, it requires your intuition and imagination. You will be illuminating young people's attitudes, experiences and behaviour. You seek to address the questions that began the evaluation process.

EXAMPLE*

Most of the young people gained a lot from participating in the leadership project. Four of the young people show signs of becoming "high fliers." All but one young person in the sample groups showed great progress, the most progress was made from someone with few skills or confidence at the start although she was not one of the highest scorers on "leadership" at the end. Of note was this comment she made in the final discussion, "I will not leave school to marry. I will carry on with my schooling and get married later." It is also important that some of the young people recognize that they are NOT natural leaders but the project gave them the confidence and skills to identify a skills set such as (E) who said, "This project has made me realize I am not a leader, I am a planner…"

7. The final step in Data Analysis is to formulate what you have found out as conclusions and set out specific strategies for change, improvements or simply a scaling up of something that you find is working well! These strategies will often be expressed in an evaluation report as, "recommendations." Also, there may be one-off pieces of information or quotes that are powerful but that do not fit into a pattern. Include these in a summary but resist making a general point from this type of information.

EXAMPLE*

Here are three strategies for change and improvements coming out of this evaluation. There would be many more.

1. More "baseline" information was needed on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of our young leaders before the program began. We need to work on a questionnaire or a way to get more detailed and relevant "profile" of each participant.

2. We need to find a way to acknowledge the progress made by individuals as much as what they achieve at the end.

3. Our focus on "leadership" in this project may be too narrow as many young people will not identify themselves as "leaders" but have other skills sets which are just as important such as "planning" or "creative ideas" or "team work."

* on a selected amount of data

STEP ELEVEN
> WRITE UP

Developing and presenting a written evaluation report gives an opportunity for others such as funding agencies, officials, researchers and other staff to learn from the evaluation. Before you decide to write a report, think about how you communicate in your organizations. Match your reporting style with this, you may not need a written report!

Here is an outline for the type of information that is usually included in a written evaluation report.[4] This may be too long a document for your purpose. Adapt it to match our needs.

A SAMPLE OUTLINE OF AN EVALUATION REPORT	Template 4

Title page

Name of report:
Name and address of the project:
Time period covered by the project evaluation:
The date the report was completed:
The name of the authors of the report:

Summary

This is really important as many people will only read the summary! It is easier to write the summary AFTER the rest of the report has been finished. It usually contains
► The purpose of the evaluation;
► A very brief description of the project (3–4 sentences);
► Who carried out the evaluation and how it was done;
► Important results;
► Important conclusions; and
► All the recommendations.

Table of contents

Description of the project (history, aims, objectives, target group)

Description of the evaluation process and methods

Results

Conclusions and recommendations

Appendices:

► A list of people involved in the evaluation, e.g., officials and young people (if this is appropriate to identify them);
► Examples of the tools and recording methods/charts you used;
► Examples of tables and diagrams; and
► List of other documents and references used.

[4] Adapted from the book Monitoring and Evaluation of a Street Children Project: A training Package on substance use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STD's, World Health Organization 2002.

STEP TWELVE
> **COMMUNICATE**

The final step is COMMUNICATE THE RESULTS of your evaluation. This may be in a report or a presentation or both. Evaluation is hard work involving the effort of many people. Time needs to be set aside to communicate and deal with the results internally and externally. Positive aspects of evaluation need to be recognized and rewarded, more challenging aspects discussed thoroughly and outcomes from these discussions link to new planning or training activities. It's important to ensure there are enough resources to communicate the results and make best use of the results as the project goes forward.

An important group to report to are the young people who took part in their evaluation. Explain what will be the outcome of the results irrespective of whether the results are positive or not. This demonstrates your respect for the young people, gives them an opportunity to comment on the results and maximizes the chances of their cooperation for future evaluation. Failing to feedback properly can lead to their reluctance to participate in future evaluation activities. Depending on the style of your report, you can develop a version specifically for young people that you can give to them.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This 12 step framework can assist project managers plan evaluations. As with everything in these guidelines, it is something to use, adapt and develop.

12 STEPS TO PLANNING EVALUATION – A SUMMARY		Table 6
1	Understand and clarify the PURPOSE of the evaluation	PURPOSE
2	Develop the KEY QUESTIONS	KEY QUESTIONS
3	Adopt, adapt or develop your INDICATORS	INDICATORS
4	Select your evaluation TOOLS (Triangulate and/or mix up quantitative and qualitative methods)	TOOLS
5	Decide how to RECORD the information and design your recording sheets	RECORD
6	Identify the specific group(s) or SAMPLE to be evaluated considering time and logistics	SAMPLE
7	Select, brief and TRAIN those CONDUCTING the evaluation	TRAIN
8	IMPLEMENTING the monitoring and evaluation activities	IMPLEMENT
9	ASSEMBLE and ORGANIZE the information, turning it into DATA	ASSEMBLE CLEAN AND ORGANIZE
10	ANALYZE the data	ANALYZE
11	WRITE UP the results	WRITE UP
12	COMMUNICATE THE RESULTS AND DEVELOP the project on the basis of the purpose of the evaluation and the results.	COMMUNICATE AND DEVELOP THE PROJECT

In the following example we set out some ideas
on how a plan might look.

	EXAMPLE OF THE 12-STEP EVALUATION PLAN	
1	► To find out for the purposes of internal organization and learning from three life skills facilitators, what they have learnt from monitoring the life skills project on leadership in the last six months.	PURPOSE
2	► What monitoring tools do we use? ► What are we learning from these tools? ► What do we do with what we are learning?	KEY QUESTIONS
3	► Indicators for question a. What monitoring tools do we use? ► The attendance registers, with details of the age and gender of each participant, are being taken at each life skills session ► Life skills session plans are developed and filed ► Life skills facilitators keep a note of answers to the before and after questions for each tool ► Indicators for question b. What are we learning from these tools? ► Life skills facilitators can state accurately the numbers and gender of those participating in their sessions. ► Life skills facilitators can describe what they are learning about the success and challenges of the sessions from participants answers ► Life skills facilitators are able to reflect on the effectiveness of the monitoring tools. ► What do we do with what we are learning? ► Numbers of formal or informal meetings at which life skills facilitators have shared their learning ► Life skills facilitators can describe example of how what they have reflected on has affected their practice ► Life skills facilitators can describe how others' learning has affected their practice	INDICATORS
4	► To test the indicator of question a. ► Examine the register(s), file(s) and facilitators notes ► To test the indicators of questions b. and c. ► Design and administer a short (one page) questionnaire mixing closed and open questions based on the three questions above. ► Conduct a focus group discussion with the life skills facilitator(s) based on the three questions above,	TOOLS
5	► Note the numbers and gender of participants ► Compile answers to each question to show the variety of answers and the number of times each answer is given ► Note extra points or questions that arise from the data ► Take notes during the focus group discussion making notes to show the variety or answers the numbers of times different points are made and any extra ideas.	RECORD

6	►	Use information generated by all five of the surveyors/facilitators	SAMPLE
7	►	Select surveyors whose status is neutral and who respects confidentiality where appropriate. Brief the surveyor on each of the ten steps, Involve the surveyor in the planning where relevant. Surveyor practices phrasing and body language for introducing and administering the evaluation activity.	TRAIN
8	►	Implement the evaluation activities	IIMPLEMENT
9	► ► ►	Assemble the four different sets of information: numbers & gender from registers; session plans, results of each session and reflections from facilitators notes; answers to each of the questions on the questionnaire; and answers to each of the questions from the focus group discussions. Check the information to ensure the questions were understood. Remove any information where the respondent obviously misunderstood the question. Ensure that information is not removed just because it is surprising! If relevant copy the information to be organized.	ASSEMBLE CLEAN AND ORGANIZE
10	►	Be reminded of the purpose of the evaluation. Get familiar with the data, create a chart, identify themes and subthemes, insert data, index, examine, interpret and draw conclusions about what has been learnt from the results. Note any unexpected results and or powerful testimonials from particular individuals.	ANALYZE
11	► ►	Write a report, a summary and a presentation for internal staff. This can also be done verbally – using notes. Write a one-page version of the report.	WRITE UP
12	► ► ► ► ►	Discuss the need to change or add to the monitoring tools for the life skills project. Meet the young people who participated. Tell them about the results and ask for their comments. Feedback and discuss the results with those who participated in the evaluation. Discuss the strengths and weakness of the evaluation process itself. In the context of how well the evaluation worked, discuss what was learnt. and how this might affect the ongoing development of the project.	COMMUNICATE AND DEVELOP THE PROJECT

Action lists such as this offer a useful check list
for further follow up of the participant.

> APPENDIX 1
ETHICAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN THE EVALUATION OF LIFE SKILLS PROJECTS

Most ethical issues that apply to adults also apply to young people although there are some additional specific concerns that need to be considered. Some projects have policies that include these issues which everyone associated with and employed by the organization is obliged to read, understand and confirm their agreement with the policy.

Safety
Ensure that evaluation work is in their best interests and will do young people no harm. Bear in mind there is a power imbalance between young people and adults (or even between young people where one of the young people has a higher status). Evaluation work gives the evaluator privileged access to young people and their views and the duty to protect them is paramount. Assess any possible risks. These risks might include: psychological abuse, such as feeling ashamed, exposed or fearful, and physical or sexual abuse.

Clarity and openness
Young people need to feel that their ideas are valued and useful. However, the activities should not create unrealistic expectations. Be open about what decisions rest on the evaluation, e.g., for continuing funding of the project. Be open about any extra time that being involved in the evaluation might take up.

Confidentiality and trust
Young people need to know if/when confidentiality will be broken (for example in the case of a disclosure about abuse) and what the parameters are.

Emotional support and informed consent
Ensure the young people know what they are being asked to do and that they can say no to anything they don't want to do. Enable the young people to make this choice and be aware of the difficulties some children may have in saying no to an adult.

Some topics may be distressing for children to discuss. Think carefully when designing evaluation and ensure it does not raise undue negative or distressed feelings.

If sensitive issues are being discussed, ensure that there are trusted adults nearby who can offer counseling support.

Relations with adults
When working with young people, care needs to be taken not to create conflicts with adults, particularly in their families. This is important when the activities involve both young people and adults, where they are being encouraged to express their views openly.

It is easy to accept the views of young people when they fit in with ones own ideas. Ensure that those involved with evaluating young people have the skills to really listen and record the views of young people. This may require careful briefing and training.

Questions to ask
Before beginning evaluation activities with young people and their communities it is important to consider the following questions:
► Why is the evaluation being done?
► Do the young people and family/community members understand why the evaluation is being done (i.e., being open and transparent about the decisions that will be taken on the basis of the evaluation)?
► Who will benefit from the learning from the evaluation?

► Who is setting the terms of reference for the evaluation? Why?

► What methods will be used to collect information? Will these help young people to feel comfortable, creative and valued?

► Is the evaluation process a burden to young people? If so, what is the minimum that they need to be involved in for effective participation?

► How can young people, their families and communities participate in and learn from the evaluation?

► How will the learning from the evaluation be made accessible to young people and adults in the community (some may not be literate)?

► What will happen after the evaluation?

► What are the rules on confidentiality?

► How will young people's interests and safety be protected?

► What kind of informed consent is needed from young people and their parents/guardians?

Issues of child protection

Any work with young people, including monitoring and evaluation activities, involves child protection concerns, especially when they are fewer than 18. Organizations and schools may find it uncomfortable talking about issues of abuse, but it happens, and programmers need to take all possible steps to protect the young people involved in their activities. The issue will be approached in different ways in different contexts. A good starting point might be to ask:

► What has society traditionally done?

► How does this protect children and young people?

► What additional steps need to be taken in the light of the current situation?

A child protection policy is a good basis for raising the issues and agreeing responsibilities and procedures with the staff involved. Ensure the organization has one. While adults need to be aware of their responsibilities, children and young people also need to know their right to be free and protected from abuse. Discuss the issues with young people, talking about how they can identify risks and how they can try to keep themselves safe. Ensure that they have identified a trusted adult to whom they can talk confidentially about any fears or actual cases of abuse.

Program managers should also discuss and agree standards for issues such as confidentiality, safety. Here are some possible questions to discuss?

► When can a young person be left alone with an adult who is not a family member?

► Until what age does this apply?

► Who "counts" as a family member?

► Where and who could a child or young person go to if they are afraid or anxious about something that is happening to them?

► When do you need informed consent from parents and guardians for the participation of a child or young person in an activity?

Working with children and young people on participatory monitoring and evaluation

This requires special approaches, which need to:

► Be interesting and accessible for children and young people

► Facilitate reflection and learning among children and young people

► Enable adults to listen to and learn from children and young people

► Be sensitive to gender, disability, HIV status and other differences

► Support children and young people and communities to analyze their situation and plan appropriate action.

> APPENDIX 2
FURTHER RESOURCES: AN ANNOTATED LIST

Here is a small selection of other guidelines on monitoring and evaluation that are relevant to field-based evaluation, working with young people and the monitoring and evaluation of life skills programs. All these are available online and for free.

Monitoring and evaluation toolkit, Janet Shapiro, CIVICUS

This toolkit deals with the "nuts and bolts" (the basics) of setting up and using a monitoring and evaluation system for a project or an organization. It clarifies what monitoring and evaluation is, how you plan it, how you design a system that brings it all together usefully. It looks at how you collect the information you need and then how you save yourself from drowning in data by analyzing the information in a relatively straightforward way. Finally it raises, and attempts to address, some of the issues to do with taking action on the basis of what you have learnt.

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of members and partners which has worked for over a decade to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are threatened.

The toolkit can be downloaded here:
http://www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20
and%20Evaluation.pdf

Aflatoun, Program Evaluation Toolkit, Part 1: Standard Aflatoun Tools Part 2: Participatory Tools

Aflatoun is an international non-governmental organization that inspires children and youth aged 6–18 years to empower themselves by offering social and financial education in the context of their rights and responsibilities.

These toolkits contain interesting approaches to monitoring and evaluation for those involved in Aflatoun projects. Part one includes examples of how to conduct survey at school, class, and individual level, and how to conduct focus group discussions, observations, child stories and visits. The second part includes creative methods using drawing, games, ranking activities and many more. It is a good source of ideas on how to conduct, record and analyze evaluative activities and it is an example of how an organization tailors evaluation activities to their own needs and creates specific guidance relevant to their partners.

http://www.aflatoun.org/
downloads/aflatounevaluationmanual.pdf

http://www.aflatoun.org/
downloads/aflateenevaluationmanual.pdf

Children and Participation: Research, Monitoring and Evaluation with Children and Young People. Save the Children

This report explains how to enable children and young people to participate in research, monitoring and evaluation. It covers the basics (such as ethics, child protection and inclusion) and presents a range of research methods and tools you can use. There are case studies from programs around the world and a list of key texts if you want to find out more about specific aspects of participation.

The report can be downloaded here:
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_5123.htm

International Youth Foundation, Passport to Success Program

An initiative of the International Youth Foundation, the Passport to Success (PTS) Program equips young people, ages 14 to 21, with a range of skills that will help them stay in school and acquire the education, professional skills, employment readiness and confidence they need to succeed in life and in the workplace.

The program targets vulnerable youth who are in school but at risk of dropping out, as well as those that are out of school, out of work, or working in dangerous environments. A key measure of success is the extent to which young people are either in school or employed six months after participating in the program. This 60 module curriculum, currently available in 12 languages, has been successfully tested in a variety of venues, including both public and private secondary schools, vocational technical institutes, teacher training colleges, and youth-serving non-profit organizations. The curriculum and program model has been easily transported and adapted to a variety of cultures and languages according to local needs and market demands.

http://www.iyfnet.org/passporttosuccess/

The Most Significant Story Method

In the evaluation toolkit we briefly describe the Most Significant Story Method (volume 2, The Toolkit, page 38 ff). This is a link to the key resource on this methods by Rick Davis and Jeff Hart.

**http://mande.co.uk/special-issues/
most-significant-change-msc/**

Children and Participation:
Research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people,
Save the Children UK, November 2000

This report explains how to enable children and young people to participate in research, monitoring and evaluation. It covers the basics (such as ethics, child protection and inclusion) and presents a range of research methods and tools you can use. There are case studies from programs around the world, and a list of key texts if you want to find out more about specific aspects of participation.

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_5123.htm

Useful Tools to Use to Engage with Young People in Participatory Evaluation, UNICEF

This toolkit includes useful descriptions of classical evaluation tools: questionnaires, key informant interviews, focus groups. It sets out tools for participatory research including card visualization, smiley faces scales, testimonials and stories, impact drawings, historical timelines, social and community mapping, trend analysis and force field analysis. It concludes with sections on participant evaluation of workshops including qualitative workshop evaluation, taking stock and process/product workshop evaluation. It is illustrated with diagrams and photos.

This toolkit by Meg Gawler was developed as part of a formative evaluation by the UNICEF Regional Office of young people's participation in Central and Eastern Europe Region and the Commonwealth of Independent States (the CEE/CIS region). The evaluation included field work in five countries (Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and TFYR of Macedonia), in which young people participated in the research design, were trained in evaluation techniques, and carried out the field research under the guidance of an experienced principal investigator. In each country the young researchers were trained in the following participatory and traditional evaluation methods, and a first draft of this toolkit served as a reference manual for the young evaluators during their field research.

**http://www.artemis-services.com/
downloads/tools-for-participatory-evaluation.pdf**

> ## APPENDIX 3
>   DETAILS OF THE WORK OF OUR
>   PARTNERS WHO CONTRIBUTED
>   TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS
>   FIELD GUIDELINES

Aflatoun

Aflatoun partners with organizations to deliver a programme of Social and Financial education to children aged 6–18 in both school and non-formal settings.

Aflatoun provides an activity-based curriculum that teaches children about values and resources, encourages them to save, informs them of their rights and responsibilities, and helps them start social and financial microenterprises. Through Social & Financial Education, children are empowered to make a positive change in their lives and in their communities.

Today, the Aflatoun programme is being delivered in over 50 countries and to almost 600,000 children.

http://www.aflatoun.org/

Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung – German Children and Youth Foundation

Since its creation in 1994, the Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung – German Children and Youth Foundation (GCYF) – has pursued an ambitious goal: to improve conditions for the younger generation growing up in Germany by creating a democratic environment to grow up in. By emphasizing the strengths and interests of each individual, the GCYF encourages young people to play an active role in society and to take their lives into their own hands. To achieve this, the GCYF involves different actors (parents, adult counsellors, institutes) in their programs to initiate reform at every key stage of a young person's life: kindergarten, school, transition between school and work, family life, and regional youth politics.

The GCYF programs and projects provide practical answers to pressing questions regarding children and youth issues. Solutions are sought together with adult educators, government authorities, companies, academic experts and the young people themselves. The GCYF utilizes its politically independent status to bring together different communities to bridge the fragmented areas of responsibilities between public administrations and welfare bodies that currently exist in Germany.

The German Children and Youth Foundation was assigned the task of providing an umbrella organization for all those who act as advocates for the interests of children and youth. The small trust fund (Children's Hour), made up mostly of donations, provides the foundation with an independent economic status and free grant-making policy. However, in order to achieve sustainable results, the foundation has developed a reliable and successful culture of public-private cooperation. The GCYF cooperates not only with public administrations, but also with private companies (both national and international), foundations and independent youth welfare organizations. The GCYF is also part of the international network of the International Youth Foundation.

In order to analyze the impact of the programs on the lives of young people, and to draw conclusions for future work, the GCYF evaluates all programmes – either itself, through an internal evaluator or externally through a third-party evaluator. During the first years, the foundation was only active in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). Today, it works closely with regional partners in fifteen federal states across Germany.

The GCYF is focuses on four main themes:
– Reforming (Pre) Schools
– Linking Educational Partners
– Taking On Responsibility
– Opening Up Opportunities

Please visit our website www.dkjs.de to find out more about the German Children and Youth Foundation and current projects!

Futból con Corazón

Fútbol con Corazón (FCC) is a non-profit organization funded in the year 2007 in Barranquilla, Colombia, that aims to give children and youth the elements to improve their lives through the teaching of life skills. Through football, FCC summons thousands of beneficiaries to promote better lifestyles, and aims to build social fabric to provide a higher quality of life. The children and youth within the communities where FCC works are constantly exposed to dangerous risks, such as drug abuse, gang recruitment, crime, alcoholism, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy and school desertion among many other social problems that arise in our society.

FCC seeks to build safe and healthy communities by increasing levels of peace, harmony and equity. It is characterized by the implementation of the innovative "Football for Peace" methodology, values-based workshops and nutrition programs. Life skills are taught within the soccer trainings, and through the workshops, FCC promotes a healthy and responsible lifestyle using an experiential teaching methodology. FCC also seeks healthy child development through nutritional support, monitoring and health promotion and prevention campaigns. Additionally, the organization works directly with the parents through workshops and activities, in an effort to solidify FCC teachings within the home.

Due to the strength of these programs FCC has been able to improve the lives of 3,600 children, youth and adults, operating in five social intervention sites in vulnerable communities in the metropolitan area of Barranquilla, Colombia. For its hard work, the organization has received national and international recognition and has been able to receive support form different organizations around the world.

Please visit us at: www.futbolconcorazon.org

Fundación Gente Nueva

"Caminando junto a los más pobres; construyendo espacios de justicia y fraternidad; transformando corazones y estructuras; trabajando en educación y organización comunitaria, desde el Evangelio de Jesús."

The Mission of the Fundación Gente Nueva is "to walk together with the poorest; constructing spaces of justice and fraternity, transforming heart and structures; working in education, community organization from the basis of the evangelism of Jesus Christ."

The objectives of Fundación Gente Nueva are: to work with the poorest sectors, to listen to them, to recognize their needs and aspiration, to teach and learn, to implement projects which arise from the need of the community. As an organization we are convinced that the reality of injustice which is imposed by poverty can only be overcome if the community is main protagonist of the change it intends to achieve. Therefore, we seek to develop strategies for transformation together with the community, making them the drivers of change and implicating different sectors of society. When we speak of protagonism, we mean that those who are initially the receiving end of the project, actively participate in our interventions with their ideas, their histories and their request for their rights.

The Foundation's work comprises eight main areas:
► Education: the Foundation manages ten schools in the poorest sectors of Bariloche.

► A teacher training institute.

► Youth, promoting the active participation of youth in civil society, politics as well as their socio-economic integration.

► Land rights, influencing public policy on issues of access to land rights for the poor.

► Child rights, with a focus on labour prevention and child protection.

► Elderly, supporting the active participation of elder generations in civil society and inter-generational dialogue.

► Management areas: Fundación Gente Nueva actively seeks to establish a dialogue between the different areas, to share and maintain the spiritual background in which the work of the Foundation is based.

► Productive activities, to create income generating activities and labour opportunities through training, capacity building, employment, self-employment and micro-entrepreneurship.

www.fundaciongentenueva.org.ar
www.quetodostrabajen.com.ar

Grassroot Soccer

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is an organization that uses the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilize communities to stop the spread of HIV. GRS trains local community role models (professional soccer players, youth sport coaches, teachers, peer educators, etc.) to educate youths on how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDs. GRS runs direct programs in South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and has worked with implementing partners to deliver our program in 13 other countries, including Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, and Namibia.

Grassroot Soccer's "Skillz" curriculum focuses on building basic life skills that help boys and girls adopt healthy behaviours and live risk-free. GRS's life skills project component in-cludes interactive activities and discussions in which students gain a tangible understanding of HIV and AIDS and get a chance to practice the skills necessary for sustainable behaviour change. Skillz creates simple but powerful connections between soccer (sport) and life skills. The Skillz approach helps young people engage in relevant and important discussions about life, take small steps to achieve their goals, are resilient when faced with challenges, and protect themselves and others from HIV and AIDS.

Globally, GRS has graduated 361,178 youths since the founding of the program. In South Africa alone, around 26,000 youths graduated from the GRS program in FY10 and the South Africa program has a target of 50,000 graduates for FY11. In the fiscal year 2010 (October 2009–September 2010), GRS saw an average global change in knowledge score of 8.3%, from 63.4% on the pre quiz to 71.7% on the post quiz. There has also been extensive research, development, and evaluation conducted on GRS programs. This work has been conducted by the Stanford University's Children's Health Council, consultants from The Population Council and the Harvard School of Public Health, and researchers from Dartmouth College, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Cape Town. Ten evaluations in seven countries have shown positive impact on knowledge, attitudes, stigma, and communication related to HIV. The most recent study showed that, compared to a matched peer group at long-term follow-up, GRS graduates in Zimbabwe were 6 times less likely to report early sexual debut, 4 times less likely to report sexual activity in the last year, and 8 times less likely to have had more than one sexual partner.

www.grassrootsoccer.org

Luta pela Paz, Brazil

Fight for Peace (FFP) uses boxing and martial arts combined with education and personal development to realize the potential of young people in communities that suffer from crime and violence.

FFP was founded by former English amateur boxer Luke Dowdney in 2000 in the Complexo da Maré, a complex of favelas (shantytowns) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Luke's experience with boxing had taught him that this sport can be an effective tool to overcome division and violence and promote the potential of young people most in need.

Like many favela communities in Rio de Janeiro, high levels of poverty, exclusion and a lack of social services in the Complexo da Maré has led to children and adolescents being employed by drug factions as openly armed foot-soldiers, lookouts and drug seller

FFP was founded to prevent the involvement of children and adolescents in crime and drug related violence.

www.lutapelapaz.org

Stiftung Kinderdorf Pestalozzi

The Pestalozzi Children's Foundation is a Swiss based international children's charity promoting peaceful cohabitation worldwide by comprehensively strengthening the competencies and rights of disadvantaged children and adolescents.. Our vision is to create a better world for children to live in through holistic and intercultural education. In El Salvador we work in Alliance with the Fundación Salvador del Mundo (FUSALMO) and Asociación AGAPE de El Salvador, who implement the Project "Habilitando Oportunidades para la Paz y el Empleo juvenil" (HOPE – Facilitationg opportunities for peace and youth employment). The HOPE project aims to develop individual, technical and social competencies in youth and adolescents in seven de-partments in El Salvador. Our intervention covers two main areas: formal education in cooperation with FUSALMO and non-formal education in cooperation with AGAPE. HOPE aims to provide an integrated educational offer which enables youth to actively participate in society in a peaceful and non-discriminatory manner, as well as to integrate into the labour market through technical training in different domains. Annually the project supports approximately. 1,200 youth in the formal school system in urban centers and 640 out of school youth from rural areas. The intervention in the formal school system takes two years, the one in the non-formal system three to six months.

http://www.pestalozzi.ch/en/who-we-are/the-foundation/

Save the Children

Save the Children is one of the world's leading independent organizations for children. STC's VISION is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Its MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. Save the Children's Values are

► ACCOUNTABILITY: We take personal responsibility for using our resources efficiently, achieving measurable results, and being accountable to supporters, partners and, most of all, children.
► AMBITION: We are demanding of ourselves and our colleagues, set high goals and are committed to improving the quality of everything we do for children.
► COLLABORATION: We respect and value each other, thrive on our diversity, and work with partners to leverage our global strength in making a difference for children.

APPENDIX 3

► CREATIVITY: We are open to new ideas, embrace change, and take disciplined risks to develop sustainable solutions for and with children.

► INTEGRITY: We aspire to live to the highest standards of personal honesty and behaviour; we never compromise our reputation and always act in the best interests of children.

Swisscontact

Swisscontact – the development organization of the Swiss private sector – provides support to entrepreneurial individuals in developing and transition economies. By helping develop vocational training programs, assisting the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector, and undertaking projects to improve the environment, Swisscontact empowers people to improve their living conditions and gradually free themselves from poverty.

As the development organization of the Swiss private sector, Swisscontact supports economic development in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America. This is done by helping individuals create opportunities for themselves and maximize their potential, thus taking control of their own lives and destinies. Swisscontact is convinced that private sector involvement in development initiatives is a crucial element of a successful fight against poverty. Skilled employees and entrepreneurial small-business owners are critical for the sustainable economic development of a country. Through consulting and vocational training, in close collaboration with proficient local partners, we help people improve their professional skills and employment readiness, give them access to input and output markets, and help create the basic conditions for sustainable economic growth. We give people the motivation and skills to change their own lives for the better, effectively helping others to help themselves.

Swisscontact was created in 1959 by leaders from the economic, scientific, and political sectors in Switzerland. It is not affiliated with any political party or religion. Over 500 people work for Swisscontact worldwide to achieve sustainable social, economic, and environmental development. An additional 600 retired professionals make up the Senior Expert Corps, volunteering their knowledge and experience for SMEs in developing and transition countries.

Headquartered in Zurich, Swisscontact is also represented through the subsidiary Swisscontact Germany in Stuttgart, the US non-profit organization American Friends of Swisscontact in New York, and local representatives in project countries. Swisscontact projects fall under the following categories:

► Fostering vocational training and continuing education by developing market-oriented vocational training systems, developing demand-driven practical skills training, introducing innovative training methods, and creating model schools.

► Supporting small and medium enterprise (SME) by improving the offering of business development services and financial services for SME, product development, quality assurance, access to markets and information, microfinance (incl. mobile services) and micro insurance.

► Reducing environmental impact through improving air quality, waste management and recycling, introducing sustainable technologies, public relations campaigns, and advising municipal and national governments and authorities.

The Promise Foundation, India

The Promise Foundation (TPF) was established as a charitable trust in 1987 to provide services related to mental health, education and potential realisation. The Foundation comprises a core group of psychologists, social workers, special educators and teachers, as well as an international network of specialist consultants.

Our target group is children, adolescents, young adults and their caretakers. We focus on three specific programs:
► Early childhood care and education.
► Literacy development
during the primary school years.
► Career counselling and livelihood planning during adolescence and early adulthood.

Our work takes the action-research approach. All our programs are based on extensive research. We use the findings of our research to inform the development of applications.

Over the years, TPF has established linkages with important government departments and other nodal agencies. This includes:
► A wide range of local and national NGOs
► City Corporations
(Bangalore, Chennai, Pondicherry)
► Ministry of Human Resource Development (New Delhi)
► National Council for Educational Research and Training (New Delhi)
► National Institute for Advanced Studies (Bangalore)
► National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development (Bangalore)
► National University for Educational Planning and Administration (New Delhi)
► University Departments in India and England

TPF is also a part of various national policy making committees such as the Working Group on Adolescents and the National Curriculum Framework Review.

Further information about our approach and programs is available on our website:
www.thepromisefoundation.org

TPF has developed various career counselling programs to address the career development and livelihood planning needs of Indian young people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. All of our counselling material has been extensively trial tested and validated. These programs have reached more than 100,000 young people in the last 12 years.

Our research and experiences have been published widely. This includes the following:
► Career Counselling: A handbook (Tata McGraw Hill, 2004).
► Approximately 12 scholarly articles in peer reviewed journals both Indian and international.
► Presentations at international and national conferences.
► Popular articles as columns in newspapers and magazines.

TPF has grown to become an institution disposing at the same time of the scientific experience and knowledge for the potential realisation of children and young people.
www.thepromisefoundation.org
www.jivacareer.org

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 3

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH: A SELECTIVE REVIEW

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> INTRODUCTION

Evaluations of life skills programs for youth typically include the question whether the intervention produces any positive or negative changes in the target group's lives. Impact evaluations are supposed to provide rigorous evidence that the programs are effective or ineffective, which is a pre-requisite for their eventual success. In other words, they give reliable answers to the question whether the intervention produces any positive or negative changes in the young person's lives. This chapter reviews selected conceptual issues and methodological approaches to impact evaluation of life skills programs for youth. After providing a definition of impact evaluation, some reasons for carrying out an impact evaluation are critically discussed. Next, factors that might reduce the credibility of the proposed changes in outcomes are summarized. The next section gives an overview of commonly used study designs to answer the question whether the intervention produced changes in outcomes. Specifically, experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs, and non-experimental designs are summarized. Finally, the applicability of im-

pact evaluations to the projects of the Jacobs Foundation Partners is discussed.

Life skills programs for youth aim to improve their abilities to deal with the challenges in their everyday life in a manner that is adequate for their age and experience. When it comes to program evaluation, one of the most important questions that one can ask about any life skills program is whether the intervention produces any positive or negative changes in the target group's lives. For example: Have members of the target group acquired or enhanced the life skills that the program was intended to promote (e.g., cognitions, attitudes, and behaviour)? If yes, how effective was the intervention? If it was effective, why? If it was not effective, why not? These questions are key to understanding what worked well, what was challenging, and what useful knowledge the intervention produced for practitioners, researchers, funders, and policy makers. In general terms, impact evaluations of life skills programs are supposed to provide rigorous evidence that the programs are effective or ineffective, which is a pre-requisite for their eventual success. But how is this evidence generated?

This chapter offers an introduction to these questions by describing specific methodological approaches for evaluating the impact of life skills programs for youth. These approaches are summarized under the term "impact evaluation." The chapter is intended to help the reader understand the role of impact evaluation in this context by providing general guidelines. It is not intended to provide in-depth information on how to conduct impact evaluations. Its main purpose, rather, is to selectively review common approaches. The applicability of impact evaluations to the projects of the Jacobs Foundation Partners is also discussed.[5]

DEFINITION OF IMPACT EVALUATION — Table 7

An analysis that (a) measures the net changes in outcomes caused by life skills programs for youth and (b) appropriately answers the relevant research question for the appropriate context. Typically, this analysis uses elaborated research designs and the best methods available to determine whether or not the net changes in outcomes can be attributed to the life skills program. "Impact" means the longer-term positive and negative consequences of the life skills program, both intended and unintended, as well as the possible influence of external factors on the outcome.

European Commission, 2010; OECD-DAC, 2002; UNICEF, 2004

[5] For synthetic reviews of existing impact evaluations in low- and middle-income countries, see the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (2010).

> WHAT IS AN IMPACT EVALUATION?

Although there is wide agreement on the role of rigorous impact evaluations in prevention and intervention practices, there is considerable disagreement on how to define the criteria for a rigorous impact evaluation (White, 2009). For this chapter the following common definition of rigorous impact evaluation is used (e.g., International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, 2010):

Ideally, a causal connection is revealed between the change and the program, as well as the magnitude of this change. This is what makes an impact evaluation different from other evaluations, which usually cannot clearly demonstrate that any sustained change that is observed can be attributed to the intervention. Standard evaluations typically look at outcome monitoring and do not address anything that is counterfactual. An impact evaluation, in contrast, asks for attributions of cause and effect between interventions and outcomes (i.e., a counterfactual analysis).

Some definitions of impact evaluation specifically address how it differs from other forms of evaluation. For example, the World Bank's DIME Initiative defines impact evaluation as "a comparison of the outcomes of a program against a counterfactual that shows what would have happened to beneficiaries without the program. Unlike other forms of evaluation, they permit the attribution of observed changes in outcomes to the program being evaluated by following experimental and quasi-experimental designs."

This definition makes clear that impact evaluations indeed allow that intervention programs have a role in changing life skills, and that the evaluation of this role is "rigorous" in the sense that in the final analysis sustainable changes in outcomes can be attributed with a high probability to the effects of the intervention.

> WHY AND WHEN DOES ONE CARRY OUT AN IMPACT EVALUATION?

Impact evaluations of intervention programs such as life skills programs for youth are important for several reasons:

► First and foremost, they have the potential to reveal with high credibility whether or not any of the observed changes are due to the intervention. Although other evaluation approaches sometimes measure changes, they do not necessarily make it clear that the measured change is in fact due to the intervention. Rigorous impact evaluations are necessary to answer this question.

► A rigorous impact evaluation also has the advantage that it can control for many of the factors that threaten validity, thereby increasing the credibility of the evaluations more than designs that fail to control for such threats (see Section III for more information on threats to evaluation validity).

Rigorous impact evaluations thus have great potential to produce evidence about what does and does not work. This evidence helps practitioners, researchers, and funders implement the most effective programs (OECD DAC, 2010). It also improves the commonly used evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact (OECD DAC, 2010). Table 8 briefly defines these evaluation criteria.

COMMON EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR INTERVENTIONS	Table 8
Relevance: Are the goals of the intervention consistent with the corresponding needs, partners' policies, contextual preconditions, etc.?	
Efficiency: How well were the resources used to achieve results?	
Effectiveness: To what extent were the intervention's main goals attained?	
Sustainability: What are the long-term effects of the intervention?	
Impact: What are the positive and negative effects of the intervention, unintended as well as intended?	
European Commission, 2010	

However, the inherent opportunities and advantages provided by rigorous impact evaluations as described above must be examined in light of the challenges they also present:

► One of the major downsides of rigorous impact evaluation designs is that their effective implementation requires abundant resources, skills, and time.

► Additionally, there is little agreement about whether reporting the outcome difference between treatment and control groups is sufficient to demonstrate impact. Rather, a more theoretical approach has been proposed to evaluate impact. This approach aims to explain the causal path from intervention input to outcome while taking account of the social and economic context in which the intervention takes place (Leeuw & Vaessen, 2009; United Nations Development Program, 2009).

In summary, choosing the right approach for the impact evaluation of a life skills program requires that one carefully considers a variety of factors in the planning stage. According to the OECD (2010), the most effective impact evaluations build a strong evidence base to guide policy makers. Appropriate and beneficial contexts for impact evaluation typically include the following: (a) pilot programs that are meant to be substantially up-scaled, (b) interventions for which there is little evidence of impact in the given context, (c) innovative schemes, and, occasionally, (d) programs of policy relevance, and (e) selected other interventions across an agency's portfolio (OECD, 2010, p. 2).

> THREATS TO EVALUATION VALIDITY

The design of any evaluation of a life skills intervention is at risk for threats to its validity, that is, factors that might reduce the credibility of the proposed changes in outcomes. Validity generally means that the tools measure what they are supposed to measure. Typically, a distinction is made between internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to whether the intervention makes a difference in the specific outcomes of interest e.g., whether there is a causal relationship between intervention and outcomes or whether the intervention directly contributes to achieving the expected results; see Royce, Thyer, & Padgett, 2010). On the other hand, external validity refers to the extent to which the results of the intervention can be generalized to other contexts (Trochim, 2006).

Typical threats to the validity of measured changes include, for example, the occurrence of unexpected events during the time of the intervention that may have contributed to changes in the outcome. For example, adolescents are continually improving their life skills during the nor-

mal course of their development (see chapter on Life skills Interventions). This makes it likely that an adolescent's life skills will evolve on their own during the period of program implementation, independent of the intervention itself. Experimental designs are usually better able than non-experimental designs to control for these and other factors.

Impact evaluation studies must be rigorous enough to address the most common threats to validity, which are summarized one-by-one below.

Development

The skills that program participants are expected to develop on their own between a pretest and posttest may be the cause of the observed effect, rather than the intervention being studied. To minimize this threat, it is important to control for these developmental and other confounding factors, for example, by comparing the effects in an experimental group, which received the intervention, to those in a control group, which did not receive the intervention, within the same time period.

Selection bias. This problem occurs whenever the control group differs systematically from the experimental group on some variable, and these differences are related to the outcomes (see Heckman, 1979). The bias can be reduced by matching the groups on as many relevant characteristics as possible.

History

Events that are unrelated to the intervention program but that affect the outcomes, as well as the process of their evaluation, are likely to happen to some participants but not others. Monitoring such events may help us understand their effects.

THREATS TO EVALUATION VALIDITY /STUDY DESIGNS

Testing bias

This problem refers to the fact that the experience of the first test made prior to the intervention may impact subsequent reactions to the treatment or to retesting.

One way to control this problem is to compare findings of control/comparison and treatment groups in pre-/posttest findings.

Instrument changes

Whenever different test instruments are used pre-intervention and post-intervention, measurement of the intervention's impact can be biased. To avoid this bias, it is important to word the pre-intervention and post-intervention questions exactly the same way.

Differences in dropout rates

If the participants who drop out of one group between the pretest and posttest differ systematically from those who drop out of the other group, we do not know if the results are due to the intervention or to differences in the characteristics of the final samples. Thus, one should compare the key characteristics of the participants who complete the program with those of the drop-outs.

Impact heterogeneity

If there is a difference in outcomes attributable to contextual factors, it is not clear to what extent the intervention can be generalized to other contexts. Thus, it is desirable, although probably often difficult and/or not feasible, to draw one's samples from a broad range of contexts such as participants from different socioeconomic strata.

> STUDY DESIGNS

As there is not a single blueprint for impact evaluations of life skills programs for youth, the first question to be raised is how to select the right design to answer the right question (see OECD, 2010).

Before planning a rigorous impact evaluation and the design, it is of key significance to set up a proper and manageable monitoring system as well as a simple internal and/or external evaluation system to ensure that projects are continuously improved (see chapter 2 for more information).

It is important to keep in mind that any design should apply the generally accepted basic principles of evaluation (see for example the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards, 2010). Most rigorous impact evaluations address major threats to validity, as described above, and use both quantitative and qualitative methods. Additionally, ethical issues need to be clarified. These issues go hand-in-hand with the choice of study design and include, for example, questions about sample selection, information collection, and the analysis and publication of the findings (see Eisner, Malti, & Ribeaud, in press; United Nations Evaluation Group, 2008). Last but not least, any impact evaluation framework must be discussed in relation to the cost-benefit ratio if the benefits and challenges are to be realistically estimated.

Generally, impact evaluation designs are identified by the types of methods used to generate the knowledge about outcomes in the absence of an intervention. Three designs can be distinguished – experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental. These designs vary in feasibility, costs, staff involvement during the design of the intervention or after its implementation, and the degree of threat to the evaluation's validity.

Below, we elaborate the key characteristics of each of the three designs. These summaries were derived in part from Adamchak et al. (2000), who provide a comprehensive overview of evaluation designs for assessing program impact. The reader is also referred to two excellent introductions to evaluation research design by Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) and by Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002).

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

Randomized experiments, or randomized controlled trials (RCTs), are the methods of choice for testing the efficacy or effectiveness of life skills intervention programs for youth.

EFFICACY VERSUS EFFECTIVENESS TRIALS   Table 9

Efficacy trials are intended to determine whether an intervention is effective under optimal conditions of implementation. The implementation is tightly controlled, the number of participants is typically small, and the outcomes are usually assessed shortly after the intervention is completed.

Effectiveness trials are intended to determine whether an intervention is effective under real-world conditions. These studies typically use a large number of participants, and they require collaboration between researchers and a variety of agencies to obtain longer-term effects.

Both efficacy and effectiveness trials are important forms of evaluation in a given intervention study and can document its impact; however, effectiveness trials are particularly important for translating the findings into policy recommendations (Eisner et al., in press).

A typical experimental design includes a control group. In the present context, the control group is comprised of adolescents who have many similar characteristics to those who will receive the life skills intervention in the experimental group. In contrast to the experimental group, the control group does not receive the intervention program. Control groups help us see how outcomes change over time when no program is implemented. To control for factors likely to influence the outcomes of interest (e.g., age, developmental status, socioeconomic background), the assignment of participants to the experimental and control groups should be random.

Randomized experiments can be classified according to two types of designs: pretest-posttest and posttest-only. Both designs assign adolescents randomly to experimental and control groups, but only the first design measures outcomes both before and after the intervention, thus representing the corresponding impact as a change in outcome. The posttest-only design, in contrast, measures outcomes only after the intervention has been implemented; in this case, impact is represented by the differences between the outcomes of the experimental and control groups.

STUDY DESIGNS

AN EXAMPLE OF A RANDOMIZED EXPERIMENT: THE ZURICH PROJECT ON THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

Z-Proso is an in-progress randomized controlled trial that uses a pretest-posttest design to assess outcomes before and after program implementation in the Zurich Project on the Social Development of Children (Z-Proso; www.z-proso.uzh.ch). It is evaluating the effectiveness of two prevention programs aimed at reducing aggression and enhancing social competence in elementary school children. A total of 1,675 first graders in 56 Swiss elementary schools were randomly assigned to a school-based social competence intervention, a parental training intervention, both, or control. To document impact, several outcomes, including aggressive behaviour and prosocial behaviour (life skills) reported by children, parents, and teachers, were measured at pretest, posttest (after program implementation), and at a 2-year follow-up.

For an overview of the study's design, see Eisner et al., in press; for selected findings, see Malti, Ribeaud, & Eisner, 2010.

Z-Proso; www.z-proso.uzh.ch

These types of studies generally require thorough planning and entail considerable expertise and costs. Because of their complexity, successful randomized experiments require a broad set of conceptual and methodological skills, as well as adequate resources and funds (Eisner et al., in press). Thorough planning is required for each key stage of the RCT, such as data collection and implementation of the intervention (Boruch, 1997), particularly if the intervention is large-scale and/or involves a challenging context (Rohrbach, Grana, Sussman, & Valente, 2006; Elliot & Mihalic, 2004; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

In summary, well-conducted RCTs can provide reliable information on what succeeds and what does not succeed in enhancing youth's life skills. They thus can inform practical decision-making for implementing programs aimed at improving these skills. (For methodological criteria that should be applied when one aims to document the impact of RCTs, see the Society of Prevention Research's standards of evidence; see also Biglan, Mrazek, Carnine, & Flay., 2003; Flay et al., 2005).

Despite their tremendous potential, RCTs present many challenges. As noted above, they are costly and resource-intensive (Victora, Habicht, & Bryce, 2004), which means that careful cost-benefit analyzes are necessary. Ethical issues must also be carefully considered. One of the major ethical concerns surrounding RCTs is the propriety of withholding the life skills intervention from the control group. As program resources are typically not sufficient to cover the needs of the entire sample it is not possible to deliver the intervention to everybody at the optimal time. One way of dealing with this issue is to convert the control group to a wait-list. Members of the wait-listed control group eventually do receive the intervention, but not until a later phase of the program, usually after the study is completed. However, no one pretends that this approach solves the ethical problem entirely.

Among the most important challenge facing the RCT approach is that sometimes an RCT is simply infeasible and/or unethical. For example, researchers interested in whether frequent exposure to violence leads to a decrease in life skills obviously cannot use a research design in

which one group of adolescents is randomly assigned to violence exposure and one group that is not. Randomization is often impractical or infeasible, for example, when (1) it is already a significant challenge to recruit high-risk youth into the life skills program, and (2) there is no access to a control group, perhaps because its recruitment would be too dangerous. These are some of the pressing issues that are highly relevant to the projects envisioned by the Jacobs Foundation Partners. Before choosing an approach to evaluating life skills interventions, these pragmatic, ethical, and economic issues must be judiciously balanced against the need to maintain scientific validity, and credibility (Sanson-Fisher, Bonevski, Green, & D'Este, 2007). Table 10 summarizes some of the major characteristics of randomized experiments.

OVERVIEW OF RANDOMIZED EXPERIMENTS — Table 10

Randomized Experiments

Description	Designs	Assessment of life skills	Assessment of impact	Strengths	Challenges
Random assignment of participants to experimental and control groups	Pretest-posttest	Implementation before and after program	Differences in life skills change scores between experimental and control groups	High validity	Random assignment not always possible
	Posttest-only	Implementation after program	Differences in life skills scores between experimental and control groups	Easier data collection	No data on life skills development at pretest

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

The research designs in quasi-experiments are similar to those in randomized experiments; they have some of the same elements, but not all (see Cook & Campbell, 1979). The main difference between an experiment and a quasi-experiment is that although both use a control/comparison group, in a quasi-experiment the comparison group is selected not by randomization (see Shadish et al., 2002) but by matching. The latter relies first on identifying the key similarities between the intervention and comparison groups. Ideally, the two groups should be as similar as possible, particularly with regard to characteristics that are known to have potentially important effects on the study outcomes. For example, someone studying the effects of a life skills intervention for adolescents with aggressive behaviour problems would try to find for the comparison group a sample of adolescents from the same region, of roughly the same age, and containing roughly the same number of males and females, etc., as the intervention group. This matching approach is sometimes called the "non-equivalent group design." The comparison group can be identified before pro-

STUDY DESIGNS

ject implementation (prospective studies) or after project implementation (retrospective studies).

Quasi-experiments use the same two types of designs as experiments: pretest-posttest and posttest-only. The only difference in the two kinds of pretest-posttest designs is that in quasi-experiments the comparison group is created by matching rather than by random assignment. As with experiments, posttest-only designs in quasi-experiments measure outcomes in the intervention and comparison groups only after the intervention has been implemented.

AN EXAMPLE OF A QUASI-EXPERIMENT: THE AMERICORPS PROGRAM

AmeriCorps is a service program in the United States. It has 75,000 participants per year, the majority of whom are between the ages of 18 and 24 years. The volunteers contribute to a variety of service programs. The purpose of the study was to assess the long-term impact of AmeriCorps volunteering on participants' life skills and other outcomes. Around 2,000 youth who served full-time in over 100 AmeriCorps programs in 1999–2000 were compared on life skills outcomes to about the same number of similar youth who did not participate in the program. To further ensure group similarity, the comparison group was composed of individuals who had indicated knowledge of and interest in AmeriCorps by contacting its information line and requesting information about the program, but who did not enroll during the study period. Selected life skills such as social responsibility and civic participation were assessed both before and after program participation, and the changes were compared between these matched groups

Mattero & Campbell-Patton, 2010

The advantage of quasi-experimental designs is that it is often (but not necessarily always) easier to find a matched comparison group than a randomly assigned control group. Further on the downside, the quasi-experimental design can cause many types of validity problems. For example, the intervention and comparison groups might differ from each other on factors that were not captured by the matching. For example the two groups might differ on self-esteem; this variable might impact the outcomes of the life skills intervention, but this impact would not be detected because self-esteem was neither controlled nor measured. In other words, whereas a true experimental design can demonstrate that changes in life skills are directly attributable to the program, a quasi-experiment typically cannot rule out the possibility that other, unmeasured factors in the community and lives of the youth may have contributed to the observed changes in their life skills. To end on a more positive note, recent methodological developments offer promising ways to analyze causal effects in quasi-experimental studies (see Haviland, Nagin, & Rosenbaum, 2007; Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983; Heckman & Robb, 1985).

Table 11 summarizes some major characteristics of quasi-experimental designs.

OVERVIEW OF QUASI-EXPERIMENTS

Table 11

Quasi-experimental studies

Description	Designs	Measurement of life skills	Assessment of impact	Strengths	Challenges
Non-equivalent, matched assignment of participants to intervention and comparison groups	Pretest-posttest	Implementation before and after program	Differences in life skills change scores between comparison and intervention groups	Matching easier than random assignment	Intervention and control groups may differ on factors not captured by matching
	Posttest-only	Implementation after program	Differences in life skills scores between comparison and intervention groups	Easier data collection	No data on life skills develop-ment at pretest

NON-EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

Contrary to experiments and quasi-experiments, non-experiments do not use a control or comparison group to assess program impact. Instead, they often use sophisticated statistical techniques and strong theoretical models to demonstrate causal effects on program outcomes; in other words, they often use elaborated theories and research designs. Thus, the difference between a "simple outcome evaluation" (see chapter 2) and a non-experimental impact evaluation is an issue of a) what type of research question one has, b) what is feasible and ethical, c) methodological rigor. It has been debated whether these types of evaluations are valid, and their rigor is controversial. Not surprisingly, the non-experimental studies on impact evaluation often are considered to be less "rigorous" than their experimental counterparts, because non-experimental designs often make it

harder to attribute outcome changes unequivocally to program impact. On the other hand, non-experimental designs are more capable than the alternatives of capturing the complexity of program outcomes, and they offer greater flexibility as well as reduced costs. Finally, they can be applied in situations where experimental or quasi-experimental techniques are inappropriate, unethical, and/or impossible.

Thus, non-experimental designs should be considered as an alternative method of impact evaluation. They are most often used when a control or comparison group cannot be used for ethical reasons, when it is not possible to identify a group of adolescents who were not participants in the life skills intervention but shared essential characteristics with those who were, when the control group cannot be constructed by random selection, or when for various reasons employing a control or matched compari-

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son group is infeasible or not intended. Finally, a control group makes no sense for interventions aimed at reaching an entire target population (e.g., mass media campaigns aimed at enhancing adolescent's social responsibility in the community).

💬 EXAMPLE OF A NON-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY: THE RALLY PROGRAM

The RALLY (Responsive Advocacy for Life and Learning in Youth) program is a school- and after-school-based approach addressing life skills, development, and mental health of youth in schools. It is grounded in developmental theory and an early-intervention prevention practice for middle school students. In a recent pilot study designed to test the preventive component of the program in an urban, high-risk population in the U.S., a non-experimental design was utilized to evaluate the program's impact on life skills. Life skills were measured before the start of the school year and at the end of the school year, i.e., after program completion. Student interviews, questionnaires, and observations, as well as mental health practitioners, teachers, and program and school directors were used to evaluate the program's impact on life skills outcomes.

Malti & Noam, 2008

The major difference between experimental and non-experimental designs is that the latter allow a researcher less control over external factors than the former in all steps of the process (see Section III). Most importantly, non-experimental designs do not allow control of many factors that can change outcomes; thus, they cannot rule out alternative explanations for these changes. An observed relationship between program implementation and outcome changes might not be what it seems because of unobserved variables. Even if statistical methods are used to gather the comparison data, the data are often hard to analyze because of their complexity, and they are difficult to generalize.

On the other hand, non-experimental designs often have the advantage of taking into account the individual program features and specific context within which an intervention is implemented. For example, the evaluation of an in depth intervention study of a small number of individuals in a rare context can provide significant information on why some strategies work and others not and thus inform program development. For this reason, they can often provide in-depth information about what factors might affect the program's impact – what worked and why. It thus moves beyond mere black-box outcome evaluations.

The two most common non-experimental designs are, once again, pretest-posttest and posttest-only. The pretest-posttest design compares results of the intervention group before and after implementation of the intervention, testing observed changes in life skills for statistical significance. Typically, the life skills are measured by psychological scales with adequate reliability, different kinds of informants (e.g., par-

ticipants, teachers, parents, observations) are included, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods (i.e., questionnaires, interviews, observations) are employed. Again, the changes observed using this design cannot be causally attributed to the program's intervention.

In posttest-only design outcomes are measured after the life skills intervention has been implemented With this design, in contrast to its use in experiments and quasi-experiments, changes in outcomes are not measured at all, nor are there difference scores between an intervention and comparison group. Thus, such designs are generally useful only for measuring program

characteristics or to provide baseline data to inform new program designs. They are very weak as measures of program impact per se.

To sum up, non-experimental designs generally do a poorer job than experimental and quasi-experimental designs in estimating the full impact of a life skills program, because many threats to validity cannot be controlled. Thus, non-experimental designs have the burden of somehow showing that none of the alternative explanations a skeptic might think of for outcomes or outcome changes are valid. Table 12 summarizes the major characteristics of non-experimental designs.

OVERVIEW OF NON-EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

Table 12

Non-experimental studies					
Description	**Designs**	**Measurement of life skills**	**Assessment of impact**	**Strengths**	**Challenges**
No comparison or control group	Pretest-posttest	Implementation before and after program	Tests change scores for significance	Can document outcome changes	Difficult to identify program impact
	Posttest-only	Implementation after program	–	No strength for measuring impact	Cannot measure outcome changes over time

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There has been widespread debate on the appropriate methodological approach to adopt in conducting an impact evaluation. It has become clear that there is no golden rule for evaluating the impact of any life skills program for youth. Rather, conceptual clarity, a plausible theory of change, methodological rigor and diversity, a reasonable cost-benefit analysis, and ethical considerations are important factors to take into

account when choosing an impact evaluation approach.

There are two distinct points of view on what counts as good practice in impact evaluation (Hawe, Shiell, & Riley, 2004). One group argues that experimental designs and randomization are the only paths to reliably determining impact, because only these procedures can account for the variety of factors that cause changes in life skills, apart from the intervention itself. The

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other group argues that the randomization required for the first approach is often inappropriate because (a) the interventions at the different sites must be standardized and/or (b) randomization is not feasible in real life contexts, particularly with high-risk groups and/or programs that must be implemented in challenging contexts. Thus, they conclude, experiments are no better than non-experiments in producing credible knowledge (Deaton, 2009, 2010).

Despite this debate and the fact that any impact evaluation has to be individually designed and must take into account the specifics and contextual characteristics of life skills programs and specifics of the population under study

(Jiang, Pepler, & Yao, 2010), there is consensus that a satisfactory impact evaluation must demonstrate causality. That is, the observed changes in life skills must be attributable to the program. This achievement requires a theory of change that has testable assumptions (e.g., how does the intervention predict the intended outcome changes). It should be noted that merely demonstrating impact is not sufficient for funders or policy makers. Ideally, the program's cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit ratio should also be assessed (Cunningham, Cohan, Naudeau, & McGinnis, 2008a, 2008b).

Table 13 summarizes key characteristics of the different research designs.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGNS FOR IMPACT EVALUATIONS — Table 13

	RESEARCH DESIGN		
	Experimental	**Quasi-experimental**	**Non-experimental**
Characteristics	Randomly assigned control group	Matched comparison group	No comparison or control group
Assessment of impact (pretest-posttest design)	Differences in life skills change scores between experimental and control groups	Differences in life skills change scores between comparison and intervention groups	Tests change scores for significance
Strengths	Control for many threats to validity	Matching can be easier or more appropriate than random assignment	Can be applied in situations where (quasi-)experimental techniques are inappropriate, unethical, and/or impossible
Challenges	Randomization not always possible; cost- and resource-intensive	Matching not always possible; can be cost- and resource-intensive	Limited control for many threats to validity

> ## APPLICABILITY OF IMPACT EVALUATIONS TO PROJECTS OF THE JACOBS FOUNDATION INTERVENTION PARTNERS

Impact evaluations offer the potential for generating the reliable evidence that is essential for understanding how life skills programs for youth work and how they contribute to actual changes in life skills. Therefore, impact evaluations are particularly useful to provide evidence for projects that aim to influence public policy and decision-makers and thus to be widely scaled up. Without doubt, rigorous impact evaluations such as those employing randomized controlled trials are one key to producing the knowledge base required by policymakers to choose and implement the most successful and cost effective projects. Although proper randomization is considered to be a vital component of any rigorous impact evaluation that has the potential to produce the kind of evidence needed to move the field of evaluation studies forward, such studies are inevitably complex and time-consuming, and they require a large amount of resources. This means that the use of such designs in projects of the Jacobs Foundation Intervention Partners is meaningful and realistic only in certain cases. Quasi-experimental or non-experimental evaluation approaches are important alternatives to randomized experimental designs for studies of impact evaluation and must be seriously considered as well.

► It has become clear that **documenting changes** ideally requires a pretest-posttest assessment of key life skills outcomes, and thus this approach is recommended for projects of the Jacobs Foundation Partners. On the other hand, the control or comparison groups required for experimental and quasi-experimental designs for various reasons are often not feasible; thus these are not necessarily recommended for projects of the Jacobs Foundation Partners; non-experimental designs will often be the better choice.

► Most impact evaluations should rely on a **combination of quantitative and qualitative methods,** which strengthens the findings by triangulation. However, a small number of projects may still rely on single methods to document change.

► The impact evaluation studies of the Jacobs Foundation Intervention Partners are expected not only to address what works and what doesn't, but also **why it works** or doesn't. Answering this latter question requires a systematic monitoring and evaluation design that includes program logic, theory, a model of change, and systematic monitoring procedures.

In summary, the projects of the Jacobs Foundation Intervention Partners will in most case have to document that the program under study has had an impact; however, the rigor of the impact evaluation may vary depending on specific features of the project, as well as contextual needs and circumstances. Therefore, the Jacobs Foundation Partners should carefully consider whether an impact evaluation of their life skills program for youth is feasible. Impact evaluations are useful for the assessment of innovative models, interventions that have shown solid evidence of impact in a particular context, and pilot programs that are to be substantially extended (see OECD, 2010). Many of the Jacobs Foundation Intervention Partners' projects aimed at increasing youth life skills have limited resources and are conducted in contexts that do not allow for a systematic and thorough implementation of an experimental evaluation design; additionally, it would often be ethically questionable to do so. Nonetheless, many offer realistic and

feasible opportunities to document impact. Clearly, an experimental design is not always necessary for measuring change in these contexts. Rather, quasi-experimental and non-experimental study designs can and should be considered as alternative approaches to document program impact, i.e., changes in the outcomes of life skills intervention programs for youth. If an impact evaluation of a life skills program is feasible, the rigour of its design should depend on the program's overt objectives and logic, as well as the ethical, pragmatic, and economic context in which it is embedded. At the minimum all Jacobs Foundation projects should be evaluated with a pre-post-test design.

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