



Insights from Dream a Dream's After School Life Skills Programme:

Tracing the Social and Emotional Learning of
Young People in Bangalore for 4 years

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No
ABBREVIATIONS	i.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii.
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. WHY SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) MATTERS	3
3. DREAM A DREAM - LIFE SKILLS INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN IN ADVERSITY	4
4. A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE AFTER SCHOOL LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME (ASLSP) - (2015-2018)	5
5. METHODOLOGY	6
6. QUANTIFYING THE IMPACT OF THE ASLSP PROGRAMME	9
6.1 MAJOR FINDINGS USING THE LSAS SCALE	11
7. ECHOING THE YOUNG SKILLED VOICES	17
8. KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	20
9. CONCLUSION	23
10. REFERENCES	24
APPENDIX	26

ABBREVIATIONS

ASLSP	After School Life Skills Programme
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning
CCP	Career Connect Programme
EFA	Education for All
LSAS	Life Skills Assessment Scale
RSOC	Rapid Survey on Children
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Life skills are critical in fostering young people's well-being and competency. They play an important role in the development of young people's social, emotional, and cognitive skills. The enhancement of life skills helps young people overcome obstacles and prosper. The long-term success of young people is dependent on his or her social and emotional well-being, which is a fundamental requirement in addition to the foundational capacities of age specific literacy and numeracy. Dream a Dream addresses this need by using a child-centered approach where each child is equipped with life skills through innovative and experiential learning methods.

The current report is a longitudinal study that looks at the impact of life skills on the social and emotional learning of young adults between 13- 16 years age. The standardised life skills assessment scale (LSAS) has been used to assess young people's life skills, and the reflection summaries of the young people have been analysed qualitatively. The study's findings show that the life skills intervention has a positive impact on young people's social and emotional growth. There was an improvement in all the five life skills assessed, namely interaction with others, overcoming difficulties and solving problems, managing conflict, taking initiative and understanding and following instructions. However, a stark gender differential is evident in the life skill scores with female participants performing better than the male participants. The longitudinal study reveals that life skills interventions are an effective way to develop psycho-social and emotional competencies in young people and make them ready for life. This research study also serves as an effective evidence and direction for implementing such interventions in schools and to integrate it into the school curriculum. The study highlights the need for effective implementation of life skills in schools as it supports the cognitive, social and emotional development of children.





Young people from our After School Life Skills Programme at the Life Skills Day event held in 2021. Photo Credit: Prasanna H

1. INTRODUCTION

Phased between the childhood and adulthood in the human life cycle (usually between 10- 19 years of age), adolescence is a period of positive energy and is often described as a tumultuous time for the youth. They have unlimited energy and a strong urge to experiment and create a better world. According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA,2014), there are 1.8 billion youth in the world between 16-24 years of age. In India, more than 243 million individuals, accounting for 20 per cent of the population, are in the age group of 10-19 years (National Statistical Commission,2017).

Studies indicate that the health and educational status of adolescents in India is not very promising owing to a vast array of psychosocial and economic concerns (Yanky, 2011). In recent years, there is an increase in stress among adolescents, mainly due to the increase in expectations in the fast changing and competitive world. Research studies (Crede & Kirncel 2008; Rao, 2011,Pearson et al.,2021) indicate life skill competencies in young people are not adequate to address the challenges of the 21st century. According to the National Crime Bureau (2020), students were one of the most vulnerable groups resorting to suicide and this accounted for 8.2% of the total suicides. The differential capacity of handling stress even in the old age is evident from the fact 97000 males died out of suicide in 2019 in comparison to 41000 females in India (Statista Research Department, 2021). The growing stress among Indian adolescents is symbolic of the lack of life skill competencies in them and this also gets translated in their old ages, if not addressed on time. All these indicate that adolescents require more than the foundational competencies of numeracy and literacy skills. This is one of the reasons why 164 nations committed to Education for All (EFA) have included 'life skills' as a basic learning need for all young people (UNICEF, 2012).

There has been an increasing interest in life skills over the years. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1996), "life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." In other words, life skills prepare an individual to live independently and productively in society. The Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (2001) "defines life skills as the ability to maintain a state of mental and physical wellbeing while interacting with others within the local culture and environment." UNICEF defines life skills as "a change in behaviour or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas.... knowledge, attitude, and skills."

Research evidence indicates that training adolescents in life skills enhances their social development. Life skills intervention conducted showed a significant reduction in anxiety and stress among adolescents (Kaur and Joshith,2021). Anuradha (2016) suggest that it leads to long-term development and improves social compatibility (Roodbari et al., 2013). Training programmes on social emotional learning not only improves life skills among adolescents (Srikala and Kishore, 2010), but also help in developing emotional maturity and stress resilience (Shwetha, 2015). Young adults being productive members of the society should be trained in life skills so that their values are increased by reforming the existing education system and giving due importance to life skill education (Aparna and Raakhee, 2011). Khera (2012) in her study on the "Core Life Skills of Adolescents in Relation to Their Self-Concept Developed through the YUVA School Life Skills Programme" indicated a positive co-relation between

core affective life skills and self-concept of adolescents, which means those who possess these essential skills are more confident in all aspects.

All the above research evidences signify the necessity of life skills competencies for the overall development of adolescents. The inseparable link between physical, cognitive, social and emotional development makes it essential to adopt a balanced approach that pays attention to these dimensions.

2. WHY SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) MATTERS

The primary goal of education for children is to achieve the foundational skills in academia and become culturally literate and reflective life-long learners. Education should prepare young people to appropriately navigate their personal and professional paths. There is widespread consensus among parents and resource persons in the society that schools should provide pupils with more than just academic teaching to prepare them for life and employment. By the time their schooling tenure is completed, young people should attain optimal outcomes in the domains of cognitive, social-emotional-ethical development, which makes every child a skilled and well-rounded citizen (NEP, 2020).

Research suggests that 21st-century schools must provide more than academic training to nurture children's success in school and life. Children who lack social and emotional abilities become less connected to school as they grow older, affecting their academic performance, behaviour, and health (Blum and Libbey, 2004). Social and emotional learning (SEL) has been long considered a "missing piece" in education (Elias, 1997). It is a promising approach to enhance children's success in school and life. At present, schools have limited resources to address this concern. Extensive research studies indicate mastery of social and emotional competencies is associated with overall well-being and success in school.

The term "social and emotional learning" was introduced by the Fetzer group as a conceptual framework to promote the social, emotional, and academic competence of young people and to coordinate school-family-community programmes to address those educational goals (Elias et al., 1997). SEL encompasses a variety of social emotional skills and traits. SEL is defined as a process of acquiring core competencies to recognise and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish, and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively (Elias et al., 1997).

Research studies document that social and emotional competencies can lead to positive and significant improvements in children. This is reflected in an increase in students' self-confidence and self-esteem, improved attitudes towards school and education, and an increase in their prosocial behaviour and academic performance in terms of test grades and scores. Improved social and emotional competencies also lead to a reduction in problem behaviour such as aggression and levels of emotional distress (Durlak et al., 2011). The present study investigates the social and emotional competencies developed by young people through the After School Life Skills Programme.

3. DREAM A DREAM - LIFE SKILLS INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN IN ADVERSITY

Dream a Dream is a registered, charitable trust empowering children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds to overcome adversity and flourish in the 21st century using a creative life skills approach. Currently, the organisation works with 10,000 young people a year through two innovation labs—the After School Life Skills Programme (ASLSP) and the Career Connect Programme (CCP), training over 9,828 teachers/educators from six states. This includes 19 districts in Karnataka and have impacted over 2.4 crore children till date there. Strategic Partnerships with state governments in Delhi and Jharkhand have helped connecting with over 1 million children for the purpose. Dream a Dream works on a strong collaborative approach with local charities, corporates, volunteers, governments, expert consultants, and a host of national and international strategic partners.

At the centre of Dream a Dream’s approach is the child and the organisation believes that every child has the potential to overcome adversity and develop life skills. A child’s closest influencer is a caring and compassionate adult. The compassionate adult could be a teacher, a parent, a facilitator, a mentor, or a volunteer. Then, there is the ecosystem, which includes a supportive community of practitioners who are working towards education reform, such as the government, policymakers, administrators, and other such stakeholders, and eventually the society in which the young person inhabits.

Dream a Dream works with children in adversity from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing violence at home, neglect, abuse, and lack of opportunities. Each of these can cause problems for children and is detrimental to their well-being. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS, 2021) found that among children under 5 years of age, 35.5 per cent were stunted or short, 19.3 per cent were wasted or thin for their height, and 32.1 per cent were underweight or light. Further studies indicate that children from disadvantaged backgrounds show deviations in growth patterns that can lead to development delays, known as failure to thrive. Failure to thrive is associated with a range of mental health and developmental issues, resulting in challenges throughout life (Schwartz, 2000).

Failure to thrive, along with the ill-equipped system of education, can lead to a host of problems that hinder young people from thriving. Young people from such backgrounds exhibit disciplinary problems and display deficits in cognitive, social, and emotional skills. They do not demonstrate age-appropriate behaviour in managing conflicts, solving problems skillfully and making responsible decisions. These behavioural problems can negatively affect young people in the long term. Various research studies have proved the negative effects of adversity on children, and this is ameliorated through life skills. Dream a Dream works to address this severe effect of adversity through life skills interventions.

The life skills interventions at Dream a Dream are designed in a way that young people develop the knowledge and skills to manage emotions, recognise, become aware of emotions, and maintain healthy relationships with peers, family, and community. The life skills interventions empower young people to improve their interpersonal skills and take responsible decisions in their career and life. Dream a Dream addresses the adversity of young people through the After School Life Skills Programme (ASLSP), Career Connect Programme (CCP), and the Strategic Partnerships (SP).

4. A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE AFTER SCHOOL LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME (2015-18)

The longitudinal study examined the influence of life skills interventions on social and emotional learning of young people enrolled in the ASLSP. The programme is an innovation and experiential lab which uses the medium of sports and arts to engage and develop critical life skills. The new approaches to life skills are developed, introduced, demonstrated, and fed back into a larger framework for learning. Young people participating in this programme are primarily between 8-15 years of age. The programme is implemented in the following two modes:

- Life Skills through Creative Arts and
- Life Skills through Sports (Football)

Young people who join the ASLSP, choose either an art-based or the sport-based medium. They are then divided into age-relevant batches. For the successful implementation of the programme, Dream a Dream designed a specialised Life Skills Curriculum for Sports and Arts with the support of partners and experts from the United States, United Kingdom, and South Africa. ASLSP comprises of 25 sessions, which include structured and unstructured sessions. The structured sessions are taken from the curriculum and have a focused life skill theme, while the unstructured sessions give freedom to the facilitators to design their own sessions within the context of the groups and communities they are working with. The young people are divided into batches of 20-30 participants per batch, age wise, and each batch receives 25 sessions during the school year.

5. METHODOLOGY

The longitudinal study examines the impact of the life skills intervention on the social and emotional learning of young people enrolled in the ASLSP. The study involved 110 young people from 10 partner schools who attended the ASLSP for four years (2015-2018). The entire study was completed in two phases -- the first phase being quantitative, involving a pre- and post-test using a standardised measurement tool. The second phase involved a qualitative study of the reflection summaries of young people who had participated in the four-year training programme. The participants' reflections were categorised into themes (based on social and emotional competencies) and analysed.





Young people from our After School Life Skills Programme at the Play for Resilience event in 2021. Photo Credit: Prasanna H

6. QUANTIFYING THE IMPACT OF THE ASLSP PROGRAMME

As mentioned in the preceding section, the impact of the life skills intervention on young people have been examined in the first phase of the study. The Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) was used to assess young people's life skills in this study. The Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) is a simple, reliable, and valid measure of life skills assessments that is now used in several developing nations (Kennedy, Pearson, Brett-Taylor and Talreja, 2014). LSAS is the world's first peer-reviewed, standardised, and published impact measuring instrument for underprivileged children. It is culture-free and based on child and adolescent development. The LSAS is a five item, 5-point impact scale based on the World Health Organisation's (1997) definition of life skills. The five life skills that have been considered are listed as follows:

- **Interacting with others:** The ability to communicate with others. This could be an individual person, a small group, a large group, with teachers, or with the opposite sex. It involves the ability to interact in an effective, respectful, sensitive manner.
- **Overcoming difficulties and solving problems:** The ability to acknowledge that there is a difficulty, actively seek ways to overcome or solve it through various means, such as asking for help, or taking some action. This includes the person's ability to overcome difficulties, face obstacles, ask help appropriately and solve problems successfully.
- **Taking Initiative:** The ability to come forward and do things independently, whether it is to pursue one's own interests or to further the interests of others. This includes behaviour such as sharing ideas, taking the lead, encouraging others, raising one's hand, coming forward to help the facilitator with a task, or staying back after the session to help clean up.
- **Managing Conflict:** The ability to be aware of the conflicts both internal and external and at the same time manage conflicts in a respective manner. This includes being assertive, resolving disagreements appropriately, not using violence or foul language
- **Understanding and following instructions:** The ability to comprehend, understand and respond to instructions appropriately. This includes comply with instructions and ask for clarifications when needed.

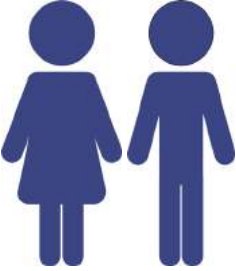

The five simple life skills assessed provide a wide range of information on children's developmental milestone. These 5 life skills are indicators of areas of competence. Each item (dimension) is assessed on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = does not yet do, 2 = does with lots of help, 3 = does with some help, 4 = does with a little help, 5 = does independently.

According to LSAS, a normative score of 2.5 with an SD of 0.75 may be acceptable for most children/ young people from disadvantaged communities entering NGO programmes (Kennedy et al., 2014). The pre-test (baseline) for the LSAS was administered at the start of the programme (2015), and the post-test (end line) was administered at the end (2018).

The following section summarises the major findings of the LSAS assessment administered on the treatment group of 110 students. However, a brief understanding of the demographic characteristics

of the treatment group is also necessary to have a clear understanding of the findings.

As mentioned in the preceding section, 110 youths participated in the assessment study. Their demographic characteristics have been captured using variables of gender and age. The following table (1) summarises the demographic characteristics of the respondents:

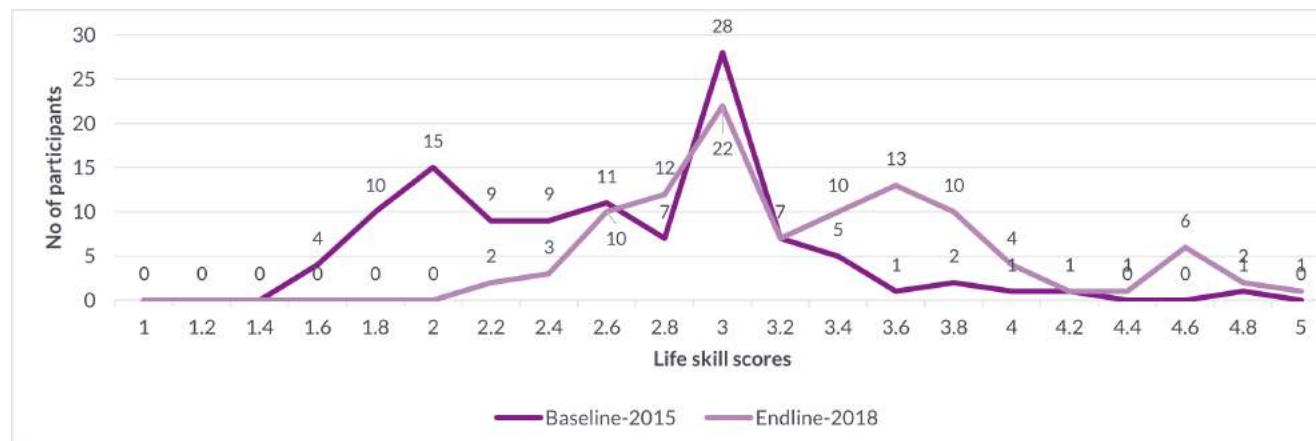
Indicator		Distribution	
		Number	Percentage
	Male	54	49.10
	Female	56	50.90
	Total	110	100
	13 years	43	39.10
	14 years	55	50.00
	15 years	10	9.10
	16 years	2	1.80
	Total	110	100.00

It is evident that there has been an equal participation of male and female participants (50 per cent each). Close to 40 per cent of the children were of 13 years age, 50 per cent were of 14 years, 9 per cent were of 15 years and the remaining 2 per cent were of 16 years.

6.1 Major Findings Using LSAS Scale

The respondents were assessed on the LSAS. A particular child could score a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5. The performance of the participants are summarised in the following graph (1.1).

Graph 1.1: Life skills scores of the participants during baseline and endline

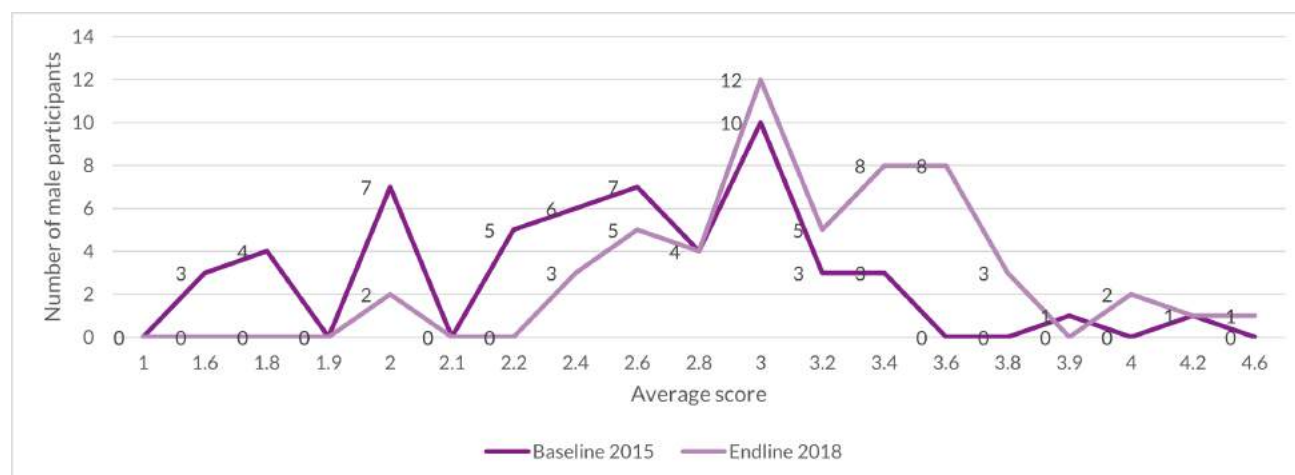


The above graph 1.1 shows the life skills improvement of young people. The results show 54.6 per cent of the participants significantly improved their skills (standard deviation $\geq .75$ points). Most of the young people demonstrated life skills with little help by the end of the study. This is evident from the fact that at the inception of the study close to 42.7 percent (47 participants) score below the LSAS standard norm (< 2.5 points), which improved to only 4.5 percent of the participants scoring below the LSAS standard norm in 2018.

Score pattern by gender

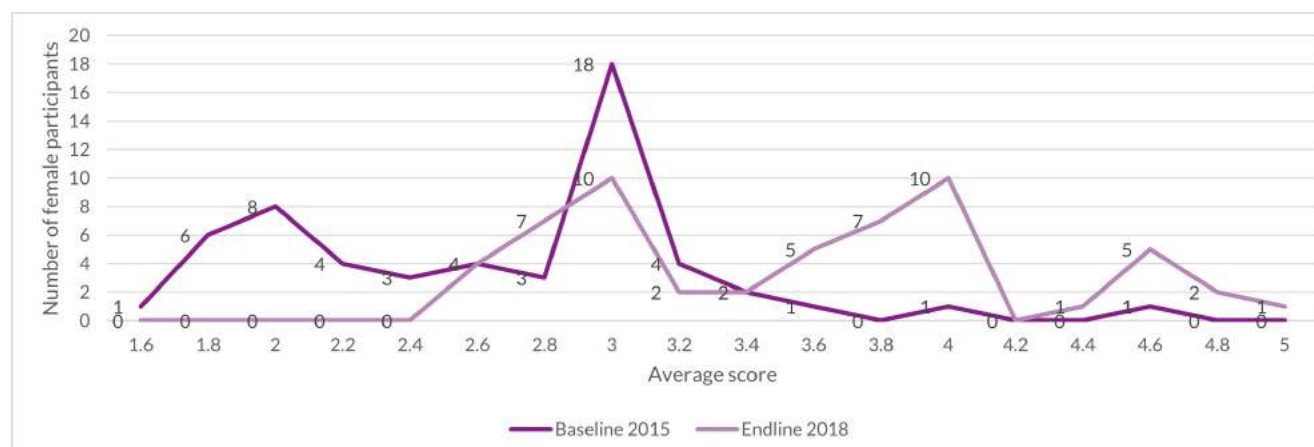
Both male and female respondents participated in the study and the difference in gender wise performance have been documented.

Graph 1.2: Life skills scores of the male participants during baseline and endline



As evident from the above illustration, male participants have demonstrated improvement in the overall score during the endline assessment in comparison to the baseline assessment in 2015. There has been an improvement by over 37 percentage points between the baseline and the endline assessment with 91 percent participants (49) scoring above the LSAS standard norm(≥ 2.5 points) in 2018 in comparison to only 54 percent participants (29) in 2015.

Graph 1.3: Life skills scores of the female participants during baseline and endline



It is evident from the above illustration that the female participants fared better than the male in the endline assessment as the lowest score reported by any female participant in the endline was 2.6, as opposed to 2 in the case of the male participants. Moreover this difference in gender wise performance is also evident in the endline average scores with around 100 per cent of the female participants(56) scoring above LSAS standard norms(≥ 2.5 points) against 91 per cent of the male participants(49). Even for the endline average scores, the female participants outnumber the male by 9 percentage points in scoring above the LSAS standard norm.

Primary research reveals that the sessions have helped young people improve their interactions with others, become aware of their emotions, overcome difficulties, solve problems, take initiatives, and manage conflicts constructively.

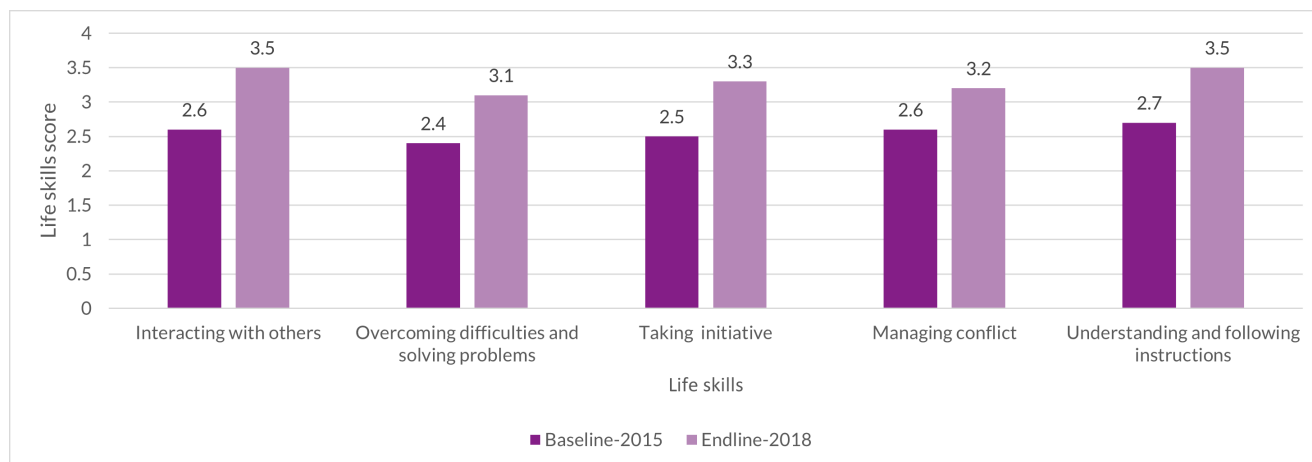
The following section summarises the performance of the participants by each skill set considered in the life skill assessment. These include the following:

- Interacting with others
- Overcoming difficulties and solving problems
- Taking initiatives
- Managing conflict
- Understanding and following instruction

The following graph (1.4) explains the change in life skills scores of the participants in each of the five life skills measured.

The following graph (1.4) explains the change in life skills scores of the participants in each of the five life skills measured.

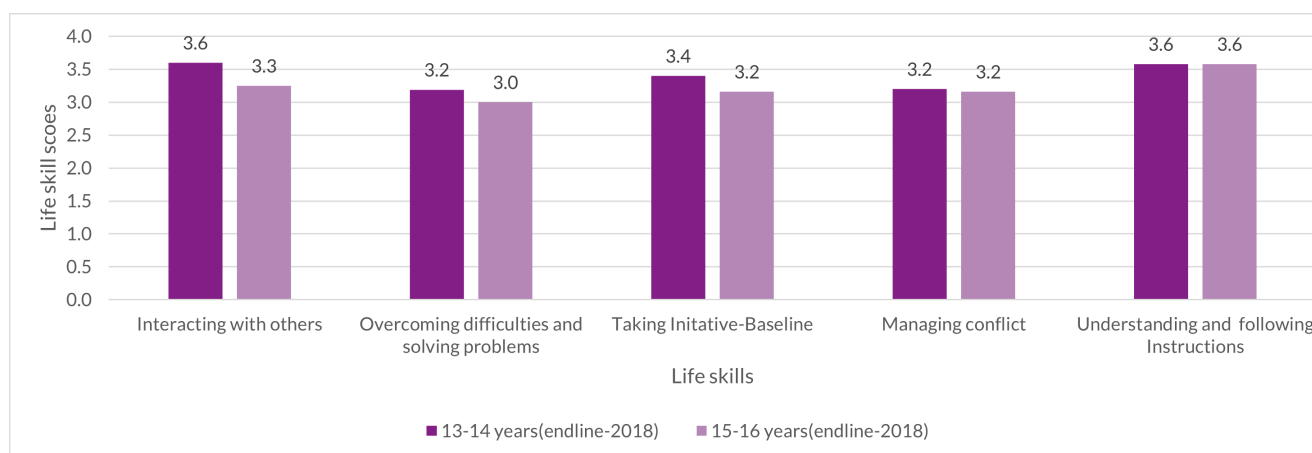
Graph 1.4: Improvement in each life skill (2015-2018)



At the end of 2018, the young people improved in each of the five life skills assessed. Skills like peer interaction and comprehending and following instructions saw significant development. Participation in extracurricular activities, leadership, and relationship skills in young people are among the other skills that have increased. The findings revealed that young people’s classroom behaviour has improved. They listened to their teachers, appreciated and respected their classmates. There was a decrease in the use of abusive language and bullying among peers. The improvement in the scores have been summarised in the above graph (1.4).

In terms of the age-wise distribution of the performance of the participants in improving the life skills, the younger age cohorts of 13-14 years seem to be more receptive of the training imparted to them and this is evident in the life skills scores summarised in graph 1.5.

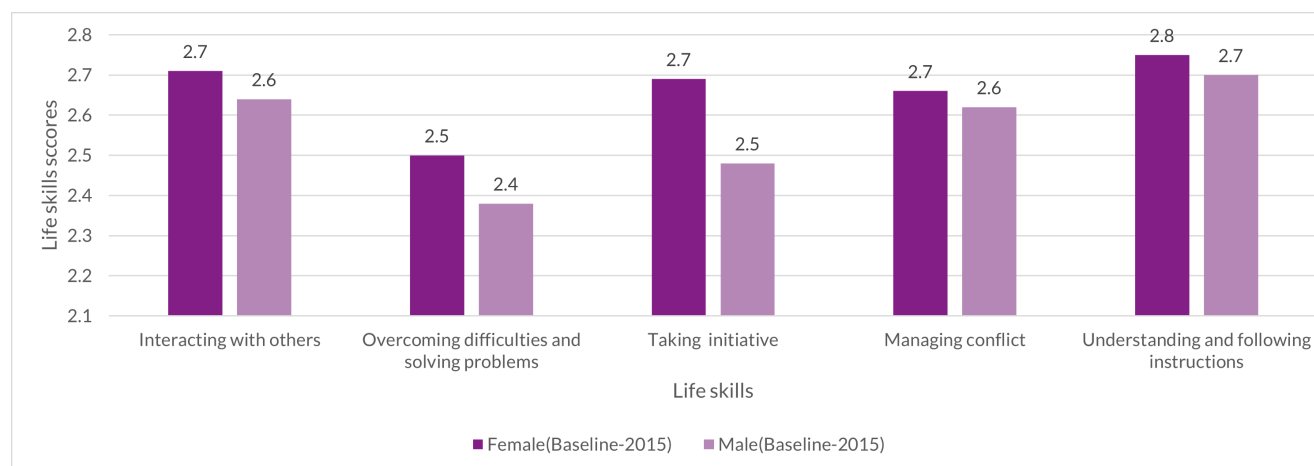
Graph 1.5: Life skills scores of participants of different age groups



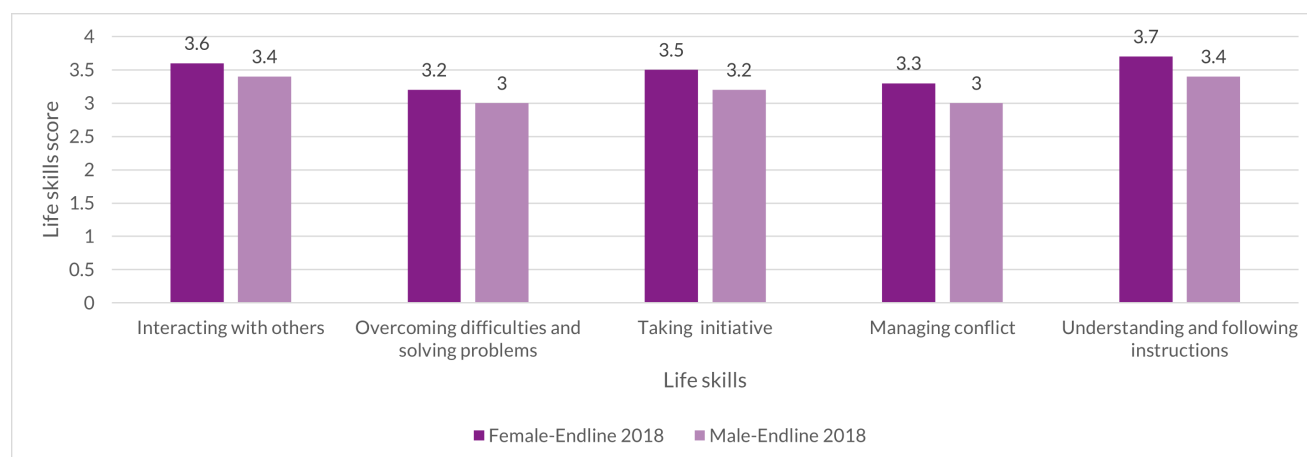
The above graph indicates the life skills of participants belonging to two age groups, 13–14 years and 15–16 years. At the end of the programme, participants in the age group of 13–14 years had higher life skills score in interaction with others, overcoming difficulties and solving problems and taking initiative. The study results show that both age groups had equal scores in managing conflicts and understanding and following instructions by the end of the programme (2018).

There is a substantial gender differential in the life skill scores. The average scores of the female participants was much higher than the male participants at the inception of the program and this is shown in Graph 1.6.

Graph 1.6: Baseline life skills scores of participants by gender



Graph 1.7: Endline life skills scores of participants by gender



By the end of the programme, female students obtained a higher overall average score in each of the five life skills (2018) in comparison to the male participants. Both male and female students exhibited significant improvements in peer interaction and classroom behaviour, particularly with teachers and classmates. Female participants in the study exhibited higher participation in extracurricular activities. The life skills interventions assisted young people in incorporating principles of equality into their daily lives at home and at school.



Young people from our After School Life Skills Programme at the Life Skills Day event in 2021. Photo Credit: Prasanna H



7. ECHOING THE YOUNG SKILLED VOICES

The study's second phase looked at how young people who attended the ASLSP developed their social and emotional competencies. The experiences and reflections of young people on the impact of life skills were gathered. A total of 30 summaries of reflections were gathered and thoroughly read. The importance of life skills on young people was underlined in several storylines. The summary of reflections provided information about young people's strengths, problems, and behavioural changes.

The following were the major themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of stories collected from young people who attended the life skills intervention. The social and emotional competencies young people developed along with their experiences are shared below:

- **Improved Interactions with Others:** One of the themes was the interaction of young people with others. The study showed young people interacted positively with peers, teachers, and family members. developed leadership skills, led life skills sessions, took initiative during group activities, and effectively navigated social situations. The life skills sessions helped young people to communicate clearly, negotiate conflicts constructively, convince family members and improve participation in extracurricular activities. Most of the students improved their interactions with peers and asked for help when needed.

Experiences shared by young people

"I learned the qualities of sharing and interaction with my friends and others. It helped me build confidence to talk in a big group. I feel proud of myself for taking the leadership role in activities conducted without any help."

"The activities helped me come out of my inhibitions. I was able to speak in front of a larger group and mingle with them. I took initiative in many of the activities I participated in. My communication skills have improved, and I feel confident when speaking to people."

- **Awareness of emotions in self and others:** Another important theme examined was awareness of one's emotions and understanding of the same. The life skills sessions helped young people become aware of emotions, which in turn improved their belief in themselves and their strengths. It helped students to handle feelings in pro social ways and to recognise how different situations made them feel.

Experiences shared by young people

"I did not have a healthy relationship with my parents. I did not interact much with them. The sessions helped me realise the reason behind it. Now I interact with them better. I feel our relationship has become much stronger."

"I learned that one needs to understand oneself better, one's strengths and weaknesses. This in turn helps us manage things better."

Self-Management Skills: The third important theme that emerged was self-management skills. This helped young people to regulate their emotions and behaviour, handle stress, control anger, and remain relaxed. The life skills programme helped them to be patient in tough situations.

Experiences shared by young people

“I learnt to face challenges. I take leadership while playing football and manage the team members.”

“I learnt to control my anger and respect others. Whenever needed, I extend help to my friends. My parents appreciated the positive changes in my behaviour.”

- **Overcoming difficulties and solving problems:** Another important theme that was examined was the enhancement of knowledge and skills, to make constructive choices in personal behaviour and solve problems. The young people developed responsibility, made appropriate decisions, realistic evaluations of various actions, and were able to stand up for their rights.

Experiences shared by young people

“The life skills programme gave me the courage to talk to my father about the adverse effects of alcohol and how it affected our family.”

“I no longer rely on my friends to make decisions for me. I tried to understand the pros and cons and make decisions on my own.”

- **Respectful and Improved Environment during sessions:** One of the themes examined was a change in the classroom environment. The participants respected their peers and the facilitators. During the sessions, the students listened to the instructions, remembered them, and followed them. Acceptance and appreciating their fellow classmates have become a regular practice. The students were polite and disciplined in class. There was a decrease in the use of abusive language and bullying among peers.

Experiences shared by young people

“I am no longer a nuisance to my classmates and teacher. I allowed my peers to answer the questions and did not irritate them when instructions were given to them by the teachers.”

“The sessions helped me to be attentive in class and respect my fellow classmates. I stopped using abusive language in the classroom. The sessions helped me to appreciate my peers for the good things they do.”

- **Improved Personal Relationships:** There was an improvement in personal relationships with family members. The interventions helped young people value their parents more than anyone else. They started sharing their feelings with their parents. Some of the young people even considered their parents as their best friends. The reflection time during the life skills sessions helped young people realise that their parents are pillars of support.
- **Improved Academic Skills:** There was an improvement in the academic skills of young people. The young

people managed their time efficiently both at home and at school. The life skills session also helped the young people show an interest in learning new things, planning for and focusing on the future.

Experiences shared by young people

“The sessions helped me improve my concentration in class and plan my day. It helped me develop an interest in academic and co-curricular activities.”

- **Improved Cognitive Skills:** The life skills sessions helped young people acquire basic cognitive skills such as organising and planning daily activities and being attentive in class. The session motivated the young to focus on the future and set goals. The sessions helped young people to be more creative in class and outside the classroom.
- **Taking Initiative and Conflict Management:** The life skills sessions enabled young people to take initiatives like leading sessions and helping peers in times of need. The young people learned to manage conflicts in an effective and respectful manner, which included resolving disagreements in and outside the classroom effectively. The use of violence or abusive language while tackling conflicts decreased to a large extent among young people.

Other Emerging Themes:

Other emerging themes were the change in the mindsets of parents and children. The parents allowed students to participate in extra-curricular activities like sports and cultural activities like dance, drama, etc. Parents allowed their daughters to take part in sports activities after school hours and to wear sports attire. The life skills interventions helped to promote concepts of equality among young people in school and at home.

8. KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The key findings from the study have been summarised in the following section:

- Life skills play an important role in the development of young people's social, emotional, and cognitive talents. By the end of the study, most of the young people had exhibited life skills with little assistance.
- A decrease in the use of abusive language and bullying among peers was noticed. Appreciating and respecting fellow classmates has now become a regular practice in class.
- Increased shift in parental attitudes. Parents let students to participate in extracurricular activities like sports. Parents permitted their girls to participate in sports beyond school hours and to wear sports attire.
- Improvement in the academic skills of young people. The young people managed their time efficiently both at home and in school. The life skills session also helped the young people show an interest in learning new things, planning and focusing on the future.
- Young people made appropriate decisions and realistic evaluations of their actions and were able to stand up for their rights.
- Life skills interventions helped to promote concepts of equality among young people in school and at home.





Young people from our After School Life Skills Programme at the Life Skills Day event in 2021. Photo Credit: Prasanna H

9. CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the life skills intervention had a significant positive impact on the social and emotional learning of young people who participated in the ASLSP. The LSAS administered to young people in the longitudinal study indicated improvement in all five life skills measured, such as interaction with others, overcoming difficulties and solving problems, taking initiative, managing conflict and understanding and following instructions at the end of the 4-year programme. The social and emotional competencies developed in young people were categorised into 9 major themes. Improved interaction with others, emotional awareness in oneself and others, self-management skills, overcoming difficulties and solving problems, taking initiative, managing conflict, improving the classroom environment, academic skills, cognitive skills, and personal relationships were among them. However, a gender differential has been documented in the life skill scores of the male and the female participants with the latter performing better than the former. Adequate attention needs to be diverted to bringing gender parity in the life skill competencies to pave the way for a better future for all the participants. The longitudinal study revealed that life skills are an effective way to develop social and emotional competencies in young people and make them ready for life. This research study also serves as effective evidence and direction for implementing such interventions in schools and integrating them into the school curriculum. The study highlights the need for effective implementation of life skills in schools as it supports the social and emotional development of children.

The results of the study also stress the need for evidence-based research on life skills intervention and the urgency of integrating such interventions into the school curriculum. The present study is limited to understanding the impact of life skills intervention on adolescents who participated in the ASLSP. However, in-depth research studies need to be designed to map the impact of life skills on the direct and the indirect beneficiaries.

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APPENDIX

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