



Life Skills Curriculum

FACILITATOR HANDBOOK

Facilitator Handbook

A guide to design and deliver life skills interventions

This Handbook belongs to: _____(Facilitator Name)

Contact No: _____

Copyright © Dream A Dream 2023

PREFACE

Dream_a Dream is an Indian non-profit organisation in India working to transform the experience of education for the 130+ million children living in poverty in India. Our aim is to change the purpose of education towards the idea of Thriving for every child.

The core of our philosophy is the belief in the inherent potential of every child. At the same time, we recognise that children and young people facing adversity, such as poverty, violence, and social exclusion, often experience significant challenges in their personal, social, and educational development. The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted the struggles of young people and the challenges they face. Hence it is important for government systems, educators and teachers to recognise and work towards mitigating the long-term impact that adversity has on the lives of young people.

We believe education is no longer merely about developing skills, but about holistic development of children, including their social-emotional well-being and life skills. Educators can play a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of generational disadvantage and equip young people with the skills and mindset necessary to lead fulfilling and successful lives. To address these unique needs and challenges, the Life Skills Curriculum and Facilitator Handbook will guide the facilitators to create safe, supportive environments and provide opportunities for children and young people to amplify their strengths, nurture positive relationships, develop self-expression and other life skills.

The 4 Levels of the Life Skills Curriculum were developed based on the educational format and skills mentioned in the National Education Policy 2020. The Facilitator Handbook provides a comprehensive overview of the curriculum framework, pedagogies and session designs that support in conducting engaging sessions for the learners.

With this curriculum, we look forward to a future wherein well-being and life skills are at the core of our education systems both nationally and globally. We hope to redefine success in education systems from narrow academic or economic outcomes to preparing students to thrive at an individual, societal and planetary level. Fuelled by support from teachers, committed donors, strategic partners, governments, long-time supporters, and a global call to action around SDG4-- we look forward to changing narratives and shifting mindsets until all young people, have a more equitable and inclusive society to live in.

Suchetha Bhat CEO, Dream a Dream

Date: July 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT DREAM A DREAM:	5
ACKNOWLEDGMENT:	6
THE THEORY OF ADVERSITY:	8
LIFE SKILLS DEFINITION:	12
Core life skills: Focus and Definition:	12
DREAM LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE:	13
THE ARC OF TRANSFORMATION:	14
PEDAGOGY:	15
LEARNING ABOUT MYSELF	16
Grades Nursery, 1 and 2nd.....	16
LEARNING ABOUT MYSELF	16
Grades 3, 4 and 5.....	16
CONNECTING WITH OTHERS	16
Grades 6, 7 and 8.....	16
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP	17
Grades 9 , 10 , 11 and 12.....	17
ART OF FACILITATION:	18
SESSION DESIGN:	27
STRUCTURED SESSIONS:	27
UNSTRUCTURED SESSIONS:	27
1.Kit for Learners (Option 1)	28
2.Kit for Facilitators / teachers (Option 2)	29
3. Kit for school (option 3)	30
ANNEXURE - 1 FEELINGS VOCABULARY:	31
ANNEXURE - 2 STRENGTHS, QUALITIES VOCABULARY.	32
ANNEXURE - 3 CHECK-IN QUESTIONS LIST:	34
ANNEXURE - 4 CHECK-OUT QUESTIONS LIST:	36
ANNEXURE - 5 LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE:	37

ABOUT DREAM A DREAM

Dream a Dream is an Indian non-profit organisation working to transform the experience of education for the 130+ million children that go to public schools in India. We aim to change the purpose of education towards the idea of “Thriving” for every child irrespective of their background.

Since 1999, Dream a Dream has mainstreamed life skills as a critical approach to help children overcome adversity and learn to thrive. Today, the organisation is transforming the Indian education ecosystem through its programmes, curriculum, pedagogical innovations and the development of holistic assessment frameworks while also shifting the narratives around the purpose of education and success.

Dream a Dream’s work is spread across 6 Indian states, reaching over 3 million children through strategic partnerships with state governments, and other non-profits, and funders in India.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This handbook required a huge amount of work, research, dedication and its implementation would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and teams. Therefore, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of them. First, we express gratitude to our partners -

PYE - Partners for Youth Empowerment is an international non-profit organisation that partners with communities around the world to activate the creative potential of young people and provide vital life skills to succeed in a rapidly changing world. PYE provides training and support to programme leaders and youth-serving organisations globally in using creativity and the arts to empower youth; based on a proven methodology called the “Creative Community Model”. The Model combines techniques with lasting impact drawn from the arts and motivational learning to develop creativity, personal power, cross-cultural competency and skills for leading purposeful lives. External evaluations give the Creative Community Model high marks on key indicators of healthy youth development, especially in increasing self-awareness and confidence, young people’s motivation to learn and engagement in their schools and communities. In addition to on-the-ground training and support, PYE convenes an online international learning network where practitioners and organisations access resources and share best practices for creativity and arts-based youth work.

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is a non-profit organisation that uses the power of soccer to provide youth worldwide with the knowledge, skills and support to live healthier lives. The GRS Research & Development team designs innovative sport-based health curriculum, training materials, monitoring and evaluation systems to address issues like HIV prevention, psychosocial health, peacebuilding, gender-based violence and more. The GRS Research & Development team has developed health education interventions in over 20 countries since 2002.

Nadia Chaney is an international trainer, creative facilitator and poet. She has conducted 2000+ workshops, trainings and events globally. She is an architect of Toolsi; an online facilitation tool which helps people who wants to learn facilitation skills. Many of her works, approach, skills were used in this handbook. Most of the activities have been collected and compiled by her. We take this opportunity to acknowledge her work and contribution.

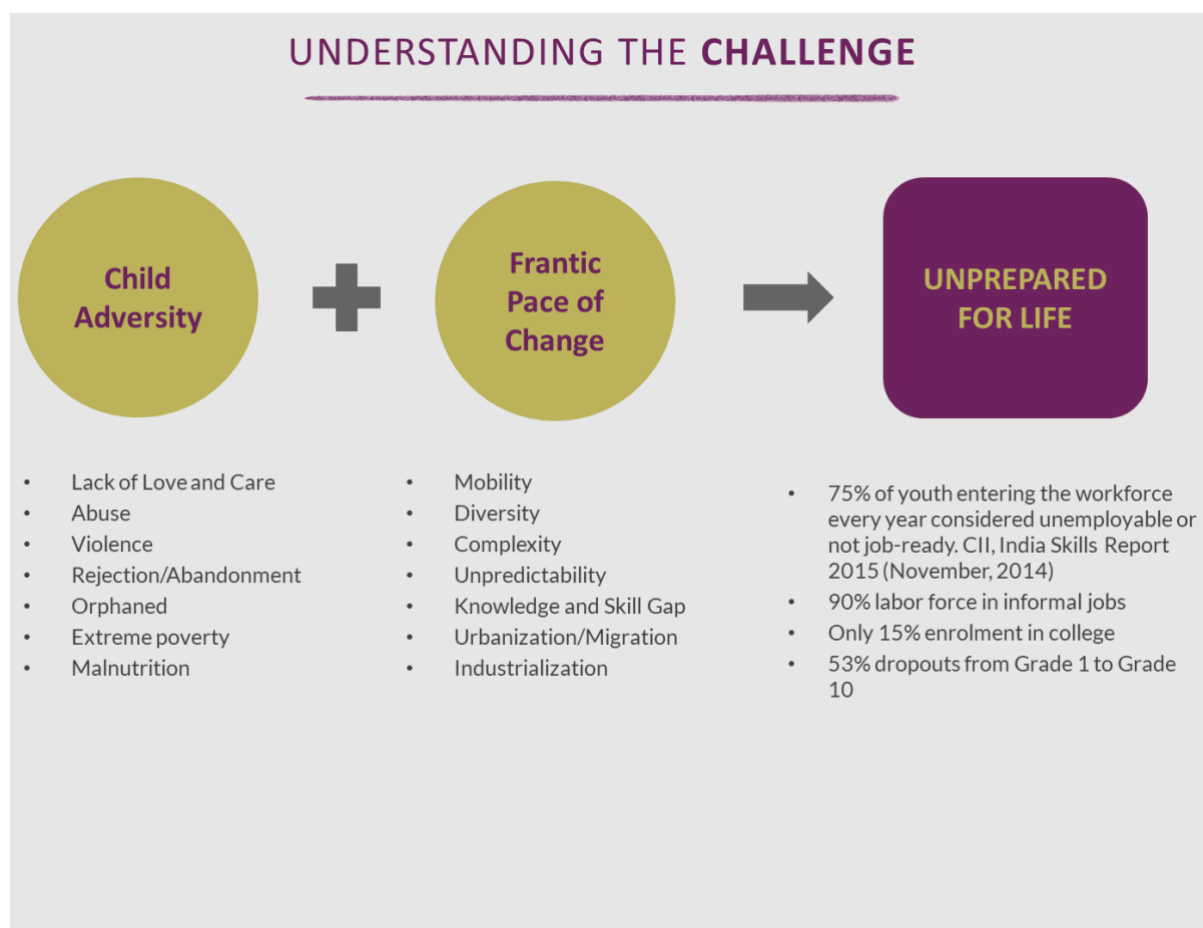
Dr. David Pearson is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and a specialist in child and adolescent mental health, formerly an NHS Head of Psychology and Honorary Tutor at the University of Southampton. He has worked for government hospitals (NHS) for over twenty years including heading the Psychology Department for both adult and child services as a part of the Isle of Wight (NHS) Trust, UK. His research interests and publications include clinical applications in child hyperactivity, food additives, hallucinations and effects of child adversity.

Dr. Fiona Kennedy is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist, was formerly an NHS Director of Psychology and Honorary Tutor at Manchester, Southampton and Exeter Universities. She is Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Fellow of The British Association for Behaviour and Cognitive Psychotherapists (BABCP). She has published journal articles and book chapters on consequences of child trauma and personality problems.

THE THEORY OF ADVERSITY

Children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds come from extreme experiences of adversity (through deprivation and neglect). Adversity affects their ability to engage with themselves and the world around them, make healthy life choices and be successful in life. **Adversity affects the normal child development cycle.** When a child misses out on sensitive periods, we call it failure to thrive or stunting in growth, where the child is always catching up to development. This is prominent and pronounced amongst children from vulnerable backgrounds.

Adversity can be of many kinds – **abuse, abandonment, experiences of crime, extreme poverty, poor care, poor nutrition and/or violence.** Adversity affects achievement of development milestones and impacts a child's ability to stay in school, pay attention and engage in learning, build healthy relationships, engage with the world, make healthy life choices and breakout of poverty. Adversity leads to lifelong life skills problems when educators, teachers and the government system don't understand the lifelong impact of child adversity and are unable to address it.



The key to stem the damage from adversity and turn the curve towards normal child development is life skills. When children develop the **ability to take initiative, solve**

problems, overcome difficulties, manage conflict, interact with each other and understand instructions – it helps them overcome adversity and build resilience.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 (NEP)

The NEP highlights the gap in the education system saying, “The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. With various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as the rise of big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence, many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by machines; while the need for a skilled workforce, particularly in those involving mathematics, computer and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences and humanities, will be in greater demand. With climate change, increasing population and depleting natural resources, there will be a sizeable shift in how we meet the world’s energy, water, food, and sanitation needs, again resulting in the need for new skilled labour, particularly in biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, climate science and social science. The growing emergence of epidemics and pandemics will also call for collaborative research in infectious disease management and the development of vaccines. These issues heighten the need for multidisciplinary learning. There will be a growing demand for humanities and art as India moves towards becoming a developed country as well as among the three largest economies in the world.

Indeed, with the quickly changing employment landscape and global ecosystem, it is becoming increasingly critical that children not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn. Education thus, must move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to **think critically and solve problems**, how to be **creative and multidisciplinary**, and how to **innovate, adapt and absorb** new material in novel and changing fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible and, of course, enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build **character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate and caring**, while at the same time prepare them for gainful and fulfilling employment.

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing **compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination**, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an **equitable, inclusive, and plural society** as envisaged by our Constitution.”

This curriculum is in strong accordance with the National Educational Policy 2020, to help instil life skills in all learners and support all educators and facilitators to develop life skills in the classroom.

The foundation level places a greater emphasis on establishing a **safe environment for learners to explore and engage using imagination**. Moving to the preparatory level, the focus shifts towards encouraging **self-discovery and understanding their emotional capacities**. In the middle level, the curriculum aims to foster connections and **building**

empathy among learners, while the secondary level focuses on nurturing and building **resilience** from the lens of strengthening our future community leaders.

Each level of the curriculum consists of 30 activities, designed to be straightforward and accessible. These activities employ three different teaching approaches: art-based, experiential, and information-based pedagogies which are an integral part of teaching and learning in the National Education Policy, 2020.

LIFE SKILLS DEFINITION

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable young people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. - WHO

Core Life Skills: Focus and Definition

Dream a Dream recognises that all the life skills are important and interconnected. We choose to represent the following 5 life skills as the core life skills as they are measurable and indicative of wide range of behavioural changes.

Skill 1 - 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 opposite genders. It involves the ability to interact in an effective, respectful, sensitive manner.

Skill 2 - 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.

Skill 3 - 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.

Skill 4 - Managing conflict

The ability to be aware of the conflicts both internal and external and at the same time manage conflicts in an effective and respectable manner. This includes being assertive, resolving disagreements appropriately, not using violence or foul language.

Skill 5 - Understanding and following instructions

The ability to comprehend, understand and respond to instructions appropriately. This includes complying with instructions and asking for clarifications when needed.

LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE

The [Life Skills Assessment Scale](#) (LSAS) developed in-house is the first of its kind, published and standardised scale that is being used by NGOs/Schools to assess improvement in life skills.

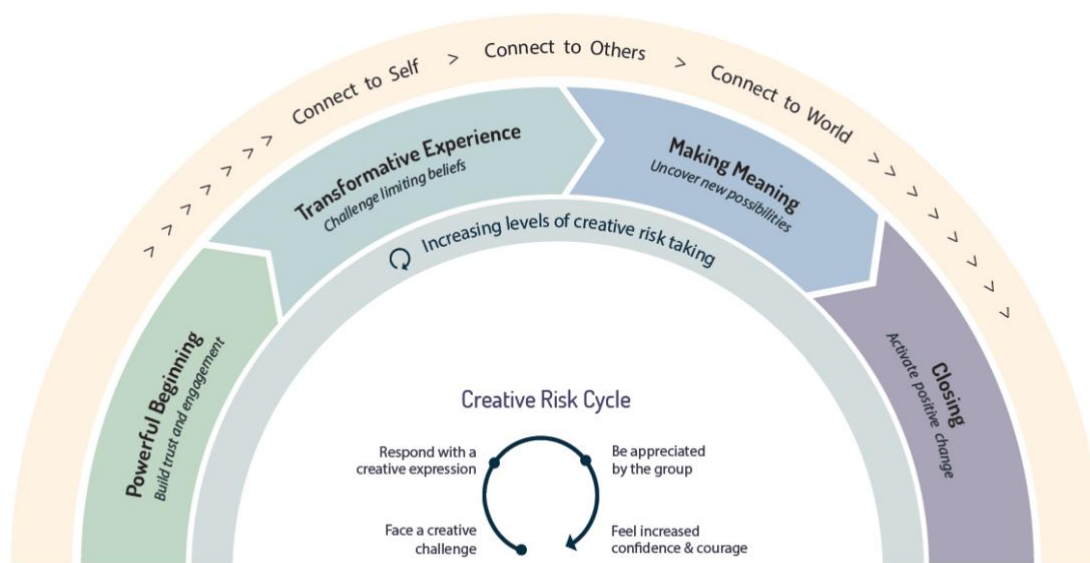
The scale was developed by Dr. David Pearson, Dr. Fiona Kennedy & Vishal Talreja and the paper on "[The Life Skills Assessment Scale: Measuring life skills of disadvantaged children and young people in the developing world](#)" has been published in the International Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality.

The LSAS measures the following 5 Life Skills:

- a. Ability to Interact
- b. Ability to Manage conflict
- c. Ability to overcome difficulties and solve problems
- d. Ability to take initiative
- e. Ability to understand and follow through instructions.

The facilitators can use this life skills assessment scale to measure life skills of their learners. The below video [links](#) will give you an understanding on how to use the scale.

THE ARC OF TRANSFORMATION



The activities in the curriculum have been developed using the Arc of Transformation framework. The Arc of Transformation is a process of holding space. It is not an activity or a group discussion. It is a process by which, we as facilitators, hold space for transformation. It is an 'arc' because once you are on the other side, there is no going back.

The process of the arc of transformation has 4 main components. We start by creating a powerful beginning to help us let down our guard. To help us connect with each other. To help us trust the process. To take a low creative risk. This is followed by a high-impact powerful experience. An experience that can be created by using the arts, or sports, or any other medium that lends itself to engage in it, in a non-judgemental way. It is hopefully something that we have never done before. Something that would usually make us feel silly or inadequate. But when the experience is created in a safe and trusting environment, our true self comes to the fore. We behave as we would in real life, outside of the workshop. We listen to our inner voices. We allow ourselves to just 'be'. We let go.

The next step is to debrief or process the powerful experience. We go deeper into who we are and what we are capable of when we are able to see and hear ourselves beyond all the voices and images that hold us back. Finally, to make sure we never forget, we close by celebrating the transformation.

The most important component: a facilitator who holds space for the transformation through role-modelling.

The arc of transformation is applicable for a 2-hour workshop, a 2-day workshop, a 6-month module or a 7-year programme. It can be designed for 8-year-olds and upwards. All it takes is for the facilitator to bring their most authentic self to the process and a powerful experience that allows us to discover our true self.

*The 'arc of transformation' has been adapted from the Creative Empowerment Model developed by Partners for Youth Empowerment ([PYE](#)) - .

PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy is the art and science of teaching, which encompasses the methods and practices that guide design, delivery and assessment. It involves understanding how people learn and how to create effective learning environments that promote learner success.

In this handbook, we introduce various pedagogical approaches that are designed to enhance student learning and engagement. These approaches include:

- ★ **Process Based:** This approach emphasises creating opportunities for learning and growth rather than the result. The facilitator guides the learner step by step through a process to explore their inner self and emotional wellbeing. It includes all art-based activities like mindfulness, drawing pictures, creating poetry among others.
- ★ **Experience Based:** This approach emphasizes creating an engaging and hands on experiential learning for the learners. Through various experiential activities, games and theatre, learners learn to reflect on their behaviours and the effect on each other.
- ★ **Information/ Teaching Based:** Through these sessions we are also providing space for the exchange of information between learners as well as with the facilitator.

In the curricula, most of the general programming elements are similar for each age group. The difference is that you will be tailoring your feedback and approach differently within each age group.

LEARNING ABOUT MYSELF

Grades Nursery, 1 and 2nd

A nursery grade is a self-contained setting where the learner can explore and learn. It strengthens the foundation and develops learner to be socially and emotionally self-sufficient in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. It provides spaces where learners can engage in play-based learning.

Skills - Learning about myself and understanding the emotions, feelings and relationships.

LEARNING ABOUT MYSELF

Grades 3, 4 and 5

In the first set of sessions, we will be working with learners in grades 3 to 5. The focus will be to provide the space and tools to learn about themselves, get over any nervousness, and have lots of fun. At this stage of development, the youth still have a mythic/oral understanding of the world - so the tools we use include making sense through opposites, stories, learning through rhythm and rhyme and discovering themselves by trying new things. The children will learn about themselves through their reactions and expressing themselves in a group in small, gentle steps. Through learning about themselves while playing, listening to others, each learner will experience articulating their own personal experiences.

Skills - Learning about myself. Expressing myself. Getting over nervousness. Working together. Following instructions. Having fun.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Grades 6, 7 and 8

In this series of sessions, the learners will learn to connect with others, take responsibility and accountability for their choices, build trust in a group setting and 'step up' to deal with personal challenges. The learners will experience activities that engage the group as individuals with an aim to work with others and understand emotions. Learners at this stage have a romantic understanding of the world. They are developing more advanced literacy skills and they are beginning to understand themselves in various historical and community context. As a facilitator, you can focus on what the learners are learning by working together, and what they notice as they reflect upon the group dynamic.

Skills - Taking responsibility. Understanding emotions. Connecting with others. Trying New Things. Stepping up. Working together. Learning from difference. Communicating clearly. Developing self-respect and empowerment.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

The last series of sessions fosters leadership and community awareness. This curriculum is meant to be challenging and asks for each youth to develop their personal leadership style. At this age, learners are beginning to think theoretically or philosophically. They want to know the reasons why things are the way they are. They are developing a sense of themselves as an active agent in their own lives. As a facilitator, you would encourage the learners to tell the truth to themselves and to others, to learn how to understand the wider world and what taking control of their own future looks like. They will learn to be accountable for their own intentions and the impact of their actions. The final workshop is a street theatre piece, where the learners get to bridge the curriculum into the world.

Skills - Being a Leader. Understanding the wider world. Understanding relationships and communication. Finding community resources. Embracing challenges. Goal setting. Intentions and Implications. Taking control of my future. Becoming a leader. Sense of agency.

ART OF FACILITATION

The facilitator engages in facilitation with a learner-centred approach that emphasises on active participation, collaboration and self-reflection. All teachers in this respect are considered facilitators and show the following -

I. Holds an attitude of welcome and inclusion:

Facilitators have a spacious, open attitude, ever scanning to invite in new voices and new forms of creative expression. It means welcoming conflict and diversity of opinion. It means looking for a place and a way for each individual to shine.

You can do that by making sure everyone's voice is heard, i.e. inviting the quieter voices into a conversation as well. With a small group you can do an activity that includes everyone. With a large group, you can break the group up into pairs or small groups and ask them to speak about something.

The more inclusive we are, the richer the experience is for all – and the benefits of inclusivity provide an important lesson for the learners.

II. Build a safe space:

A space where the learners feel seen, heard and valued is a safe space. It fosters belongingness and leads to developing empathy among the learners.

A facilitator creates such a shared experience where the learners feel secure and comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment or reprisal. The facilitator needs to hold a safe space where sensitivity and trust develop as the learners continue to share their own growth, develop self-awareness and reflect on their experiences in a group of supportive co-learners.

Involving everyone in building community agreements is a great way for the learners and facilitator to understand the risks and boundary issues of each other as well as the safety rules within their community.

III. Engage the body, mind and emotions in the learning process:

As a facilitator, our role is to attend to the energy of the group and find ways to engage the “whole person” in the learning process all along the way. This keeps everyone awake and involved, body and soul.

Studies show that the optimum attention span is between 12 and 20 minutes. Body movement eases tensions and wakes everyone up. It decreases resistance and helps us get out of our heads to connect with our emotions and intuition.

IV. Consistently invite individual and group creativity:

A facilitator provides opportunities to take incrementally more challenging creative risks over the course of the curriculum. Taking a creative risk means willingness to step

outside of one's comfort zone, take chances and try new things, even if it means a chance of failure or rejection.

Every opportunity we create for the learners to take creative risk, builds courage to take the next one. Through this consistent process of taking creative risks and receiving support from the group, we can see learners pop out of their shyness and many never go back into their shells.

Posing group creative challenges is another way to build personal confidence, collaboration skills and the ability to connect. When a group works together to make beauty, the members bond almost instantly despite their differences. Even the shy participants will usually join in.

Every time learners draw, write a poem, sing together, or create a metaphor to express their emotional state, it is an opportunity for them to take a creative risk. Hence facilitators encourage all forms of expression and ideas from everyone.

V. Develop a culture of appreciation:

The field of appreciative inquiry asserts that by paying attention to “what does work” rather than “what doesn’t work”, we naturally move in the direction of improvement and greater integration. Hence, we find appreciation to be a powerful tool to create support towards learners.

The facilitators can set a tone by actively identifying strengths in individuals and the group as a whole. For example, “It took a lot of courage for you to stand up and say that in front of the whole group.” or “I really appreciate your ability to pay attention when we are talking.”

Find genuine and real ways to praise the group. Be as specific as possible. It shows you are a good listener.

VI. Support the group in making its own art and entertainment:

The group provides all of its own entertainment through song, dance, theatre games and storytelling. The act of creating their own culture brings out the personality of each learner and builds the group identity. It also proves that we can entertain ourselves without having to be perfect.

Ask for volunteers to lead half of the group in rhythm game, write on the board when making community agreements, lead warmups. For example, whenever we lead theatre activities, we do lots of things in groups and then stop and ask for volunteers who want to perform or lead the entire group. This gives an extra challenge for those who are ready and the entire group can share the fun.

When the facilitator makes the learners feel they have control and choice; they are much more likely to participate fully.

VII. Make connections with the larger world

it's the facilitator's job to remind the young people that the underlying purpose of the gathering is not to create a safe and blissful bubble, but rather for them to be able to return to the larger world more capable of living the lives they want and playing their part in moving toward a more just, loving and sustainable world.

Holding this perspective will inform how facilitators guide a reflection process, present creative challenges to the group and relate to group members, acknowledging their inherent capacity to make an impact in the world. Holding the larger story of what is possible in our world infuses the whole learning experience with a deeper, more compelling purpose.

Asking questions like "How do you relate this to yourself?" or "Where do you see this in your community" or "How can you use XXX in your community?" are some ways to help the learners make larger connections.

VIII. Facilitate through a neutral lens

It's difficult to look at options and identify choices when you're feeling judged. It's not the facilitator's job to push the learner into deciding to change. The aim is to get the learners to see what their options are and to make as informed a choice as possible.

Long lasting change comes when youth decide on their own and find the motivation to change within themselves. For that to happen, the facilitator holds conversations with the learners from a neutral place.

TIPS ON FACILITATING VARIOUS PEDAGOGIES

Facilitating Theatre Games

The world of theatre is full of activities that you can use to bring energy to your group, set free the imagination, think outside of the box and help participants gain comfort speaking in front of a group.

You'll get your best ideas by watching three-year-olds play. You don't have to try to be funny or smart, you just need to set your imagination free with your partners. There are some basic rules of theatre improv that are good guidelines for living the creative life. When you play theatre games, you get to practice these rules and discover how much fun they bring and how quickly they connect you with others. Here are some basic rules:

The Rules of Theatre Improv

#1. Say "yes." Theatre improv depends on accepting each other's imagination. When we say yes to each other, the space of imagination grows and creativity increases. When we say no, it's like bursting a balloon. There is no game.

#2. First idea, best idea. We come up with ideas all the time, but our inner critics jump in faster than we imagine and say no. This rule tells us to follow our imagination and say yes to our ideas the same way we do to others if we follow rule #1.

#3. Make your teammates look good. Theater improv is not about fooling people and making the game hard for them. It's about giving your teammates fun and easy material to work with. This gives them the chance to add to it and the imagination begins to grow.

What makes a good audience?

Before any performance, make sure that the audience is ready. It's important that learners have a positive experience on stage.

Ask the audience "What makes a good audience?" Even if the group has answered this many times, it's a good reminder before any performance. Their answers will be things like:

- Clap,
- Be supportive,
- Be quiet,
- Listen etc.
- Finally, remind them that a good audience doesn't practice their own performance while others are performing on stage!

- Then, remind the performers that a great audience loves a great performance. Ask them to perform as if they had practiced together for a year, instead of a few minutes!
- Then, teach them the “Lights! Camera! Action”! to really get every audience member’s attention and give the group a nice clean start.

FACILITATING WRITING EXERCISES

Most people love to write once they have some techniques to make writing easy. Many of us experience a block due to early education that focused too much on correct grammar and spelling and too little on message and story. Once you have introduced activities like metaphor and free writing, you can use writing in numerous ways to enhance your programmes. Some ideas include:

1. **Conversation starter:** ask participants to do a free write on an issue before talking about it as a group. This gets everyone’s ideas and emotions flowing so the group conversation starts at a deeper level.
2. **Idea generation:** if you are working on a creative project, you can begin with everyone doing a free write and then sharing some snippets of ideas that come forward.
3. **Reflection:** free writing at the end of an activity gives participants a chance to reflect on what they have learned. The free writing helps bring forth emotions and make sense of a different thoughts.
4. **Visioning:** free writing allows the imagination to fly in directions previously unexplored. With the inner critic sent away, people think new thoughts and come up with surprising ideas.

Freewriting

Freewriting or Stream of Consciousness writing connects voice to writing, makes writing easy brings forward thoughts and provides writing material for further projects. We introduce it as an activity that all kinds of people use to get the flow going from bestselling authors to people who can barely write.

1. Ask learners to imagine that as they write, their thoughts are streaming like a river down their arm and through the pen onto the page. Their job is simply to record the thoughts as they hit the page and to keep their pen moving the entire time. If they come to stop, they are to simply write whatever they are thinking, for example, “I don’t know what to say and this is frustrating”. By continuing to commit themselves to the page, the door will open to the next thought and off they will go. This is the stream of consciousness piece.
2. The timed part means you will be telling them when to go and timing them for 5 minutes (or so) and then telling them to stop.

3. Tell learners that they don't have to worry about spelling or grammar. Their entire piece might be one long sentence, or it might be all short sentences. It doesn't matter. Whatever comes out is right.
4. They are not to re-read as they are writing or to cross out anything,
5. It's also ok to use any language they want or to completely write in their mother tongue.
6. Encourage them to imagine their pen is a paintbrush that is painting images and descriptions on the page. Invite them to take some risks with their writing.
7. Tell them, that this writing is for themselves. They don't have to read their entire piece to anyone.
8. Say, "Ready, set, go..." and off you go.
9. Give them a 30 second notice before you bring the writing to a close.

Tips: Be sure to remember to tell them that spelling, and grammar is not important and that they won't be reading their entire piece to anyone.

FACILITATING MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance bring people into a joyful state of togetherness. There is a sense of excitement, of being part of something bigger, of doing something together. When facilitating music and dance you are giving a wonderful gift to the group. But it can also be a scary thing for many non-musicians to facilitate. Here are a couple of tips if that is true for you:

Make Simple Offerings

1. Even the simplest music and dance activities bring the group together. Don't worry about harmonies, or complicated steps. Keep it simple and fun so everyone can participate.

Model Risk-Taking

1. Take a deep breath and try it! Even if you aren't totally sure of yourself, stay positive and open.
2. Remember that real learning happens as you stretch your comfort zone and that is exactly what you are asking the participants to do. So, show them your creative courage and do your best.

Start Over if You Need To

1. If the song or dance gets out of hand, just smile and start again.

Create Opportunities to innovate!

1. Improvisation in sound circles or dance circles is a great way to enjoy music in a group without having to depend on the skills of the leader.
2. It shares the responsibility and ownership of the activity and lets everyone be a part of it equally

Keep the Rhythm Steady

1. Groups will often want to speed up the rhythm of a song or dance. Make sure to slow them down or start again when this happens.
2. Staying on the beat together is the basis of a great musical experience.

TIPS TO GET THE GROUP'S ATTENTION

What do you do when you want to get the attention of the group?

Often it happens that we might raise our voices to make ourselves heard. This not only harms your voice, it is harsh and loud for the group. Unfortunately, many learners are so used to this kind of communication they don't even seem to notice.

It is possible to gain and hold the attention of a large group without raising your voice.

- The first step begins within yourself by deciding that you deserve to be listened to and by making a deal with yourself that you won't talk over chatter, and you won't shout to be heard.

We encourage facilitators to share the problem of bringing the group to attention with participants by sharing one or two ideas that the group can use:

→ **Raise your hand, close your mouth**

Imagine there is a string attached from your hand to your mouth. So when you lift your hand above your head, your mouth closes. Demonstrate this a few times to the group and then say, "Whenever someone wants the attention of the group, they can raise their hand up high.

If you see someone else in the group with their hand raised, you raise yours as well (and close your mouth)." Soon everyone's hands are raised and the group is quiet. Ask the group to practice to see how fast they can do it by asking everyone to talk and make a lot of noise and then raise your hand. Do it again to see if they can respond faster.

→ **If you can hear me, clap your hands**

Call out, "If you can hear me, clap once." Clap. "If you can hear me clap two times." Clap, clap. "If you can hear me, clap three times." Clap, clap, clap.

→ **Make your own signal**

You can also engage the group in coming up with its own signal to get quiet. A favorite technique is

1. Someone dramatically calls out "And a hush fell over the crowd." everyone responds with "Hushhhhhhhh!"
2. Someone calls out "Chur muri" and everyone responds with "oh ho".

→ **Drop a shawl on the floor**

Hold a shawl or other soft object in the air and tell the group that you want them to make a lot of noise. At some point you are going to drop the coat and the moment it hits the floor you want them to go into silence. Try this a few times challenging them to respond faster.

→ **Kilo**

Kilo!: A quick way of giving praise through clapping and cheering. A kilo is an important piece of Dream Life Skills programme culture and is led by a facilitator when a learner or the whole group does something well. learners can create “Kilo re-mixes” throughout the programme to keep the kilo fun and exciting.

→ **Churmuri**

Churmuri – is word which facilitators use to grab the group attention. when facilitators call out the word churmuri the learners should respond saying HoHo and remind silence to facilitators instructions.

SESSION DESIGN

STRUCTURED SESSIONS

What are “structured” sessions in Life Skills Curriculum?

The curriculum outlines structured sessions that focus on building specific life skills. Structured sessions include **clear activity steps, discussion questions, personal story instructions and reflection circle prompts.**

CHECK-IN (5 MINUTES)

Instruct the learners to quickly check-in with themselves about their moods using several, fun questions.

LIFE SKILLS ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)

Facilitate scripted activities focused on developing healthy behaviours related to one targeted life skill. Note that each life skill activity includes activity steps, discussion questions and a space for facilitators to prepare personal stories to share with the learners.

REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

- Lead a discussion on key messages or life skills focused on that day's session. Ask the learners for feedback on what they learned during the session and how they can connect lessons to real life.
- Address any conflict that occurred during the session and how the group can resolve it.
- Praise a participant for at least one strength that they demonstrated during the session.

CHECK-OUT (10 MINUTES)

Instruct the learners to quickly check-out with themselves about their moods using several fun questions.

UNSTRUCTURED SESSIONS

What are “unstructured” sessions in the Life Skills Curriculum?

Unstructured sessions are space given to facilitators to design and deliver the life skills activities and interventions based on **the need of their learners.** This curriculum does not outline the steps for unstructured activities, but you (facilitator) should use many of the same rituals as in your structured sessions. Begin each session with **check-in activities, conclude with a Reflection Circle,** and make the most of your Caring Facilitator Time. Use kilos, churmuri to grab group attention, refer to the Team Agreement, praise the learner and utilise any tools you find useful from the structured sessions.

How should a Facilitator balance structured and unstructured sessions?

Work with co-facilitators, other class teachers and staffs, headmasters, principals, volunteers and learners to decide how you will integrate structured and unstructured sessions into your school calendar and schedule. You should complete all **structured sessions at least once in a year and use the rest of the time for unstructured sessions.**

How can a Facilitator lead a Reflection Circle in an unstructured session?

Praise at least one learner every Reflection Circle and ask some of the following questions:

- How did today's session make you feel?
- What did you learn in today's practice?
- What was your favourite or least favourite part of today's session?
- Were there any conflicts in today's session? How can the team resolve the conflict?
- Is there anything important going on in your life that you would like to share?

USING THE LIFE SKILLS CURRICULUM

Learning to use the guide:

- Make sure to read through each session twice, a day before, so that you are properly prepared.
- Use your guide while you work with learners and look at the different pieces of the Facilitator's Guide explained below:
 - Words in italic font are instructions for learners. You need to read it to learners as it is.
 - Words in normal font is instructions for you to read yourself.
 - Outcomes are for your reference, and you need not share them with the learners.
 - Reflection questions are just guiding questions. You can refer to them based on where your learners are at.
 - Check-In and Check Out questions are mapped considering the main activity and age appropriateness.
- Identify your learners' learning needs and use unstructured sessions to meet those learning needs in case they are not covered in the curriculum.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

While the curriculum has been designed to be self-explanatory and easy-to-use, it is still necessary for anyone who is planning to use it, to invest in getting the right training to understand the approach and pedagogy more deeply. For training on facilitating the Life skills Curriculum, you may contact the following:

Dream a Dream - info@dreamadream.org

For self-training material, you may access Toolsi, an on-demand online facilitation suite for intermediate to advanced facilitators, developed by Nadia Chaney, at <https://facilitate.toolsi.ca/>

1. Kit for Learners (Option 1)

	Art Materials	
1	Crayons	1 pack
2	Sketch pens	1 packet
3	Drawing book	1 book
4	Pencils	5
5	Additional	
6	Pallet	1
7	Colours	2 of each colour

2.Kit for Facilitators / teachers (Option 2)

Sl. No	Materials	Quantity
1	Curriculum book	1
2	Facilitator Handbook	1
3	Diary	1
	Art Materials	
1	Crayons	50 packs
2	Sketch pens	50 packets
3	Drawing book	50 books
4	Pencils	5

3. Kit for school (Option 3)

* Materials List for a group of 25 learners:

SI No	Materials	Quantity
1	Curriculum book	1 set printed master copy 20 – depending on the teachers' strength
2	Teacher Handbook	20 – depending on the teachers' strength.
3	Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS)	2
4	When We Thrive, Our World Thrives book	1
	Art Materials	
1	Chart papers	80 No
2	Pastel colours/Crayons	20 boxes
3	Sketch pens (Small)	15 packs
4	Cello tape/Masking tape	5 No
5	Pencils	1 pack
6	Markers (3 colours)	2 of each colour
7	Scissors	8 No
8	Ribbons (different colours)	3 rolls (Half Inch pieces)
9	Glue stick	8
10	White board duster	1
11	A4 sheets	One bundle
12	Double sided tape	3

ANNEXURE - 1 FEELINGS VOCABULARY

FEELINGS VOCABULARY

FEELINGS (positive)

Delighted

Joyful
Happy
Amused
Adventurous

Thankful

Appreciative
Moved
Touched
Tender

Excited

Enthusiastic
Passionate
Thrilled
Exhilarated

Alert

Mindful
Clearheaded

Interested

Curious
Absorbed

Warm

Loving
Open

Peaceful

Calm
Tranquil

Awed

Inspired

Healthy

Alive
Invigorated

Confident

Secure
Safe
Hopeful
Powerful

Relaxed

Relieved
Rested
Mellow

Content

At Ease
Glad
Comfortable
Pleased

Friendly

Affectionate

FEELINGS (negative)

Scared

Apprehensive
Dread
Worried
Panic

Alarmed

Shocked
Surprised
Disturbed
Restless
Upset

Hurt

Pain
Lonely
Grief
Agony
Regret

Vulnerable

Insecure
Sensitive
Shaky
Reserved

Annoyed

Aggravated
Dismayed
Frustrated
Impatient
Irritated

Bored

Disconnected
Indifferent

Sad

Depressed
Hopeless
Disappointed
Discouraged

Jealous

Envious
Longing

Angry

Furious
Irate
Resentful
Indignant

Confused

Lost
Puzzles
Ambivalent
Torn

Tired

Beat
Burnt out
Exhausted
Lethargic

Aversion

Appalled
Disgusted
Hostile

Embarrassed

Ashamed
Guilty

Tense

Anxious
Nervous
Cranky
Overwhelmed
Stressed out

ANNEXURE – 2 STRENGTHS, QUALITIES VOCABULARY

Gifts, Strengths & Qualities The Vocabulary of Praise

Able	Clear	Enthusiastic
Accepting	Collaborative	Exciting
Adaptable	Comforting	Fair
Adept	Composed	Fascinating
Adorable	Confident	Feisty
Affable	Concise	Flexible
Affirming	Cosmic	Focused
Agile	Courageous	Forthright
Aglow	Creative	Friendly
Agreeable	Cuddly	Frank
Alert	Curious	Fun
Altruistic	Daring	Funny
Amazing	Dazzling	Generous
Amiable	Decisive	Gentle
Amusing	Dedicated	Genuine
Angelic	Deep	Good listener
Artistic	Delicate	Graceful
Artsy	Determined	Gracious
Assertive	Devout	Grounded
Athletic	Diligent	Gutsy
Audacious	Dignified	Happy
Authentic	Diplomatic	Healthy
Available	Direct	Helpful
Awake	Discerning	Honest
Balanced	Dogged	Humble
Beautiful	Dramatic	Imaginative
Bold	Dreamy	Impassioned
Brave	Dynamic	Independent
Bright	Eager	Intelligent
Broad-minded	Easygoing	Inventive
Calm	Earthy	Intuitive
Candid	Edgy	Joyful
Capable	Effective	Just
Carefree	Elegant	Kind
Caring	Emotive	Kinesthetic
Catalytic	Empathic	Laid-back Literary
Centered	Empowering	Lively
Charismatic	Encouraging	Logical
Cheerful	Energetic	Lovable
	Engaging	Loyal

Luminous
Magical
Magnetic
Mindful
Motivated
Musical
Natural
Observant
Open-minded
Organized
Original
Outgoing
Passionate
Patient
Perceptive
Persistent
Playful
Poetic
Positive
Powerful
Principled
Prescient
Proactive
Proud
Radiant
Receptive
Reflective
Reliable
Resilient
Resolute
Resourceful
Respectful
Reverent
Serene
Sassy
Savvy
Secure
Sensible
Serene
Skillful
Smart
Solid
Spirited
Spiritual
Strong
Sweet
Tactical

Tenacious
Tender
Thoughtful
Tolerant
Tough
Trustworthy
Unique
Unstoppable
Vibrant
Vivacious
Warm
Wise
Witty
Zealous
Zesty

ANNEXURE - 3 CHECK-IN QUESTIONS LIST

S.No	Check Ins	Intent
1	Who is your favorite adult? What quality of theirs do you like?	Reflect on relationships
2	Who is your favorite friend? What quality of theirs do you like?	Reflect on relationships
3	What is your favorite time of the day and why?	Reflect on emotional self
4	What quality of our favourite animal do you like?	Lighten the mood/Ice breaker/build trust in the group
5	If you have to describe yourself in only three words, what words would you choose?	Build self-awareness
6	If you are one of the only three people allowed to exist in this world, and you have the power to choose the other two people, whom would you choose? And why?	Reflect on relationships
7	Choose one thing (not a person) in this room/space that you want to be friends with? What quality of that thing do you like?	Grounding
8	If what you feel now is a fruit, what fruit would that be? Why	Grounding
9	If what you feel now is a colour, what colour would that be and why?	Grounding
10	If your current mood is a bird, which bird would that be and why?	Grounding
11	What are you looking forward to the most today?	Grounding
12	What are you afraid of the most today?	Grounding
13	What is an activity you do every day that takes a lot of time? How do you feel while doing it?"	Grounding
14	What did you miss the most during the lock-down? What you are missing now	Build Self-awareness
15	What did you enjoy the most during the lock-down?	Build self-awareness
16	What is something in your home that you find beautiful?	Grounding

17	What is one incident/person/thing from last week that you spent most of your time thinking about?	Build self-awareness
18	When you are sad or angry, what helps you get into a good mood?	Build self-awareness
19	What is one super-power you would like to have?	Reflect on aspirations
20	What is that one food dish that you never want to eat and why?	Lighten the mood/Ice breaker/build trust in the group
21	Which quality of any animal is similar to yours?	Build self-awareness/Ice breaker
22	What is the one thing you love doing the most when outside school?	Build self-awareness/Ice breaker
23	Name one person you wish to thank for something they did.	Reflect on relationships
24	Name one person you have forgiven for something they did but you haven't told them.	Reflect on relationships
25	What part of your school day do you find most challenging?	Build self-awareness
26	What do you think you'll be known for when you become old?	Reflecting on aspirations
27	How well did you sleep last night?	Reflecting on self-care/grounding
28	If you could be some other person you know for a day, who would you choose to be?	Reflect on aspirations/empathy
29	What is your favourite thing to do with your friends/family?	reflect on relationships
30	What is your biggest priority for today?	Grounding
31	If today is the last day earth will exist, what would you want to do?	Grounding/reflecting on aspirations
32	If you were a utensil in the kitchen, what would you be and why?	Ice breaker/self-awareness
33	What is one thing you love that most people hate?	Self-awareness, empathy
34	What would be the title of your autobiography?	Reflect on aspirations
35	What are the three words your best friend would describe you with?	Reflect on relationships, empathy

ANNEXURE - 4 CHECK-OUT QUESTIONS LIST

S.No	Check Outs	Intent
1	What did you learn today about working with others?	Checking the effectiveness of building relationships
2	What did you learn today about yourself?	Checking the effectiveness of self-awareness explored
3	What pleasantly surprised you today?	Checking the engagement of learners
4	What was your favourite part of today's activity?	Checking the engagement of learners
5	What was your hardest part of today's activity?	Checking the engagement of learners/ Feedback on simplicity
6	What will you go home and tell your parents/siblings about today's activity/session?	Checking effectiveness of the session
7	If you were the facilitator today, is there anything that you would have done that I didn't do?	Checking the interest levels during the session
8	Is there something that you want to do differently from today?	Checking for learning
9	If you can describe your learning from this session in one word, what would that word be?	Checking for learning/engagement
10	If you get time to reflect about today's session later, what will you reflect about and why?	Checking effectiveness of the session
11	If what you are feeling now is a fruit, what fruit would that be and why?	Checking for the mood of the class
12	If what you are feeling now is a colour, what colour would that be and why?	Checking for the mood of the class
13	If your current mood is a bird, what bird would that be and why?	Checking for the mood of the class
14	If you can express what you are feeling about today's session in one word, what would that word be and why?	Checking for the mood of the class

ANNEXURE – 5 LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE

LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE (LSAS)

Please complete this scale while observing, or as soon as possible after observing, the young person. You may need to spend some time observing before you decide. Do not spend too long thinking about each question, just record your impression. For each question, consider age appropriateness (think of actual age, rather than physical appearance).

Put an \checkmark in **one** most relevant box for each question. The comments box can be used to note down things that you saw that helped you fill in the boxes or for any other comments. You do not always have to fill in the comments boxes.

Name of young person	Gender	Name of assessor
Actual age	How old does the young person look?	Is the young person having difficulty working in a language other than his/her native language?

Date of assessment	Does not yet do	Does with lots of help	Does with some help	Does with a little help	Does independently					
IO. Interacting with others For example, does X interact appropriately with peers, staff, opposite sex? Does X communicate effectively? Does X show sensitivity to others needs and feelings? Any other comments you would like to make:										
DP. Overcoming difficulties and solving problems For example, does X find a way around obstacles that arise? Does X ask for help appropriately? Does X solve problems successfully? Any other comments you would like to make:										
TI. Taking Initiative For example, does X carry out tasks without being told? Does X show age-appropriate leadership? Any other comments you would like to make:										
MC. Managing Conflict For example, does X show appropriate assertiveness? Does X resolve disagreements appropriately? Does X accept appropriate correction? Does X do this without violence or foul language or running away? Any other comments you would like to make:										
UI. Understanding and following instructions For example, Does X understand appropriate instructions when given? Does X comply with instructions? Does X ask for clarification when needed? Any other comments you would like to make:										
OS. Overall Score You get the Overall Score by changing each \checkmark into numbers Does not yet do = 1 Does with lots of help = 2 Does with some help = 3 Does with a little help = 4 Does independently = 5 Add all the numbers and put the total in the box on the right, then divide by 5. This is the Overall Score. Put this in the Overall Score box Any other comments you would like to make:				<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Total</td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Overall Score</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">=</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Total		Overall Score	5	=	
Total		Overall Score								
5	=									

Kennedy, F., Pearson, D., Brett-Taylor, L. & Talreja, V. (2014). The Life Skills Assessment Scale: Measuring life skills in disadvantaged children in the developing world. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*. 42(2). 197-210.

LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE

Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) has been developed by Dr. David Pearson and Dr. Fiona Kennedy from the UK who have been working with Dream a Dream since 2007 to develop and publish a standardised and reliable measure for Dream a Dream's life skills programmes for young people from vulnerable backgrounds.

Their immense work has resulted in a paper co-authored by them along with Dream a Dream co-founder, Vishal Talreja. This has been published in a peer-reviewed academic journal: Kennedy, F., Pearson, D., Brett Taylor, L. & Talreja, V. The Life Skills Assessment Scale: Measuring life skills of disadvantaged children in the developing world. *Social Behaviour and Personality: An International Journal* 42(2), 197-210.

WHAT THE LSAS CAN DO FOR YOU

MEASURING PROGRAMME IMPACT

Find out how effective interventions are at increasing life skills among disadvantaged young people in India.

ALLOCATING A CHILD TO THE PROGRAMME BEST FOR THEM

See how a young person thrives in different programmes and help them choose the best one for them.

GETTING A SKILLS PROFILE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL CHILD

Look at five different skills to see relative strengths in an individual young person.

COMPARING ONE PROGRAMME WITH ANOTHER

Discover which life skills are best developed by a given programme.

COMPARING AN INDIVIDUAL'S SCORES WITH NORMS

See how one young person compares with the average scores for their age group.

FEEDBACK ON PROGRESS

Let stakeholders (donors, parents, teachers, careers, young people) see progress visually.

LSAS CAN BE USED BY

NGOs

Give feedback to stakeholders, inform strategy and maximise effectiveness.

CLINICIANS

Use life skills as an outcome measure alongside mental health measures and know it is appropriate for disadvantaged young people.

DONORS

Make better informed decisions about funding allocation and support.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPERS

Check out programme performance at an early stage

RESEARCHERS

Advance the study of life skills

FEEDBACK ON PROGRESS

Keep track of the progress of young people in your care.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr. DAVID PEARSON

Consultant Clinical Psychologist, is a specialist in child and adolescent mental health, formerly an NHS Head of Psychology and Honorary Tutor at the University of Southampton. He has worked for government hospitals (NHS) for over twenty years including heading the Psychology Department for both adult and child services as a part of the Isle of Wight (NHS) Trust, UK. Research interests and publications have included clinical applications in child hyperactivity, food additives, hallucinations and effects of child adversity. He has also published a wide range of international scientific journals, edited a mental health text book and is an award winning author of a self-help book with Dr. Fiona Kennedy about overcoming adversity and how to thrive.



Dr. FIONA KENNEDY

Consultant Clinical Psychologist, was formerly an NHS Director of Psychology and Honorary Tutor at Manchester, Southampton and Exeter Universities. She is Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Fellow of The British Association for Behaviour and Cognitive Psychotherapists (BABCP). She has published journal articles and book chapters on consequences of child trauma and personality problems. She edited a book on dissociation after trauma and has written an award winning self-help book with Dr. David Pearson about overcoming adversity and how to thrive.



Mr. VISHAL TALREJA

Co-Founder of Dream a Dream. 18 years of experience in the development sector. Vishal is an Ashoka Fellow & Eisenhower Fellow; Founder Director & Advisory Board Member at UnLtd India; Board Member of Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE Global) and former Board Member of India Cares Foundation. He is a TEDx Speaker, active writer on development challenges and human interest stories and a poet.

For information on LSAS, contact:

Vishal Talreja - vishal@dreamadream.org
 Dr. Fiona Kennedy - drfionakennedy@greenwoodmentors.com
 Dr. David Pearson - dr.pearson@yahoo.co.uk





© Dream a Dream 2023
398/ E, 17th Cross, 9th Main, 3rd Block,
Jayanagar, Bangalore- 560011
www.dreamadream.org