

# TECHNICAL BRIEF

## SYSTEM ASSESSMENT TOOL



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## Overview

The Life Skills Collaborative (LSC) is a collaborative of 18 organisations with an inherent aspiration to create the positive change needed to make the life skills ecosystem in India thrive. With a firm belief that a life skills centred education can empower children to build resilience and overcome adversities, these leading organisations are collectively building robust, scientific and scalable assets for life skills, which are contextual for India.

With a strong emphasis on enabling effective implementation of life skills in public education, LSC's efforts are focused on 3 key areas:

- Collection of voices from adolescents, young people, parents and teachers as a nationwide engagement to capture their insights on life skills and understand the needs and aspirations of these stakeholders. This initiative attempts to get ground up input on the awareness and understanding of life skills among young people, parents and teachers.
- Building a contextual glossary that simplifies the understanding of different terms being used today and evolves a common vocabulary to purposefully develop life skills in India. Currently, the LSC India Glossary has 52 skills defined along with information on the skill in action for each of these skills.
- Creating a set of assessment tools focused on skills which support two broad areas of Life Skills – Emotional Wellbeing and Future-Readiness in adolescents (11-18 years). There is also a focus on building tools which will enable State Governments to measure teacher and system readiness to implement life skill-related interventions within their states.

## State Partnerships

LSC has been fortunate to have the partnership and support of the State governments of Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand. Working closely with various departments in these States, LSC found eagerness and enthusiasm for the work in the life skills space.

Their partnership has allowed LSC to validate the assessment tools with students and teachers as well as the LSC India Glossary in multiple languages.

Experts from these four States provided us with key insights and inputs in the design and development of the assessment tools as well as the contextual and linguistic inputs for the India Glossary.

LSC is deeply grateful to officials and government experts who always made time and provided all the support that was needed.

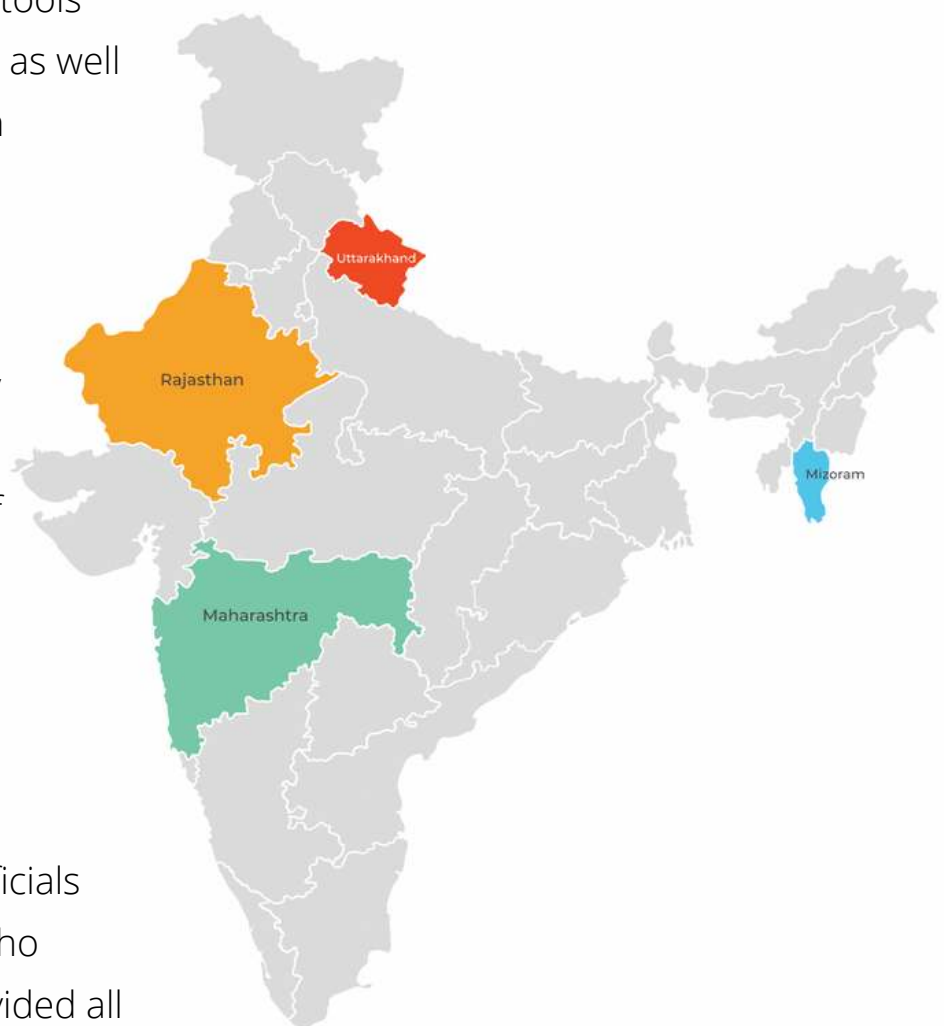


Figure 1- LSC State Partners

## LSC Assessment Tools

One of the major challenges that LSC is trying to solve is lack of standardized life skills assessments that are scientific, scalable, and contextualised to India. LSC aims to create, establish, and disseminate an assessments repository that will help evaluate the overall preparedness of the learning ecosystem including teachers and students, to help integrate life skills education into the mainstream curriculum.

The Life Skills Collaborative has created four different assessment tools:

**LSC Future Readiness Assessment for Adolescents**

**LSC Social and Emotional Wellbeing Assessment for Adolescents**

**LSC Teacher Assessment**

**LSC System Assessment**

The assessment tools have been created after months of research, rigour and consultations with experts from the four state governments and internationally renowned experts. These tools have been created as public goods to help strengthen assessments of life skills in India. The tools are designed to be robust, scientific and scalable and they have been contextualised and are made in the language of the states they are being deployed in. A rigorous validation exercise was undertaken with the intended stakeholders to refine the tool as well.

The four Assessment tools have been developed in a collaborative model, contextualised and adapted to the local context and will be made available as public goods through Creative Commons licensing.

# System's Assessment

## Objectives of the Tool

The Life Skills Collaborative developed a System Assessment Tool aimed at enabling the state education system to assess their level of preparedness (provisions and gaps) for the effective delivery of Life Skills Education for adolescents.

## Rationale and Significance

Life Skills Education is critical for the overall growth and development of adolescents as it enables adolescent empowerment and a smooth transition to adulthood (Dinesh and Belinda, 2014; Srivastava, 2015; Thakar and Modi, 2016; Talreja et.al., 2018). This significance is furthermore enhanced, given the inherent diversity and complexity in the Indian context. Life Skills Education helps foster healthy interpersonal relationships, elicit active student participation, enhance academic performance, facilitate informed decision-making and promote social inclusion and harmony among all (World Bank, 2013; UNICEF, 2019). The World Health Organisation (WHO) also recognises the importance of Life Skills in active health promotion, and attributes them to behaviours that “enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. It has also been emphasized that these skills enhance academic performance and learning outcomes, while simultaneously building a student's professional and critical skills (Talreja, et.al., 2018).

In India, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 lays a strong emphasis on combining academia with the teaching of Life Skills and 21st-century skills as part of its multidisciplinary, skill-based and holistic approach (Govt. of India, 2020). There has also been an increase in government adoption and

implementation of Life Skills Education across various states including Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, along with an increased engagement in Life Skills within the non-profit ecosystem (Bapna, 2019). However, the lack of India-specific evidence, a generalized approach to Life Skills and duplication of efforts (Talreja, et.al., 2018), along with a lack of necessary tools for intervention and assessment (Nasheeda, et.al., 2019) continues to pose challenges for uptake of Life Skills Education across the country.

While there is clarity on the need and relevance of Life Skills Education for adolescents, there is a lack of understanding and consensus on how to implement it in schools and assess students as part of it. However, there is ample evidence that emphasizes the need for the education system's active engagement and timely evaluation for effective implementation. UNICEF's global evaluation of Life Skills programs suggests a standard intervention logic which is dependent on systemic engagement and support (UNICEF, 2012). As part of its comprehensive Life Skills framework, UNICEF recommends a system approach where the role of government in promoting and delivering Life Skills within the school education system has also been emphasized along with generating demand among children and young people, their parents and communities (UNICEF, 2019). NEP 2020 has also laid out a strategy for monitoring and evaluation of the education system and educators, referred to as a periodic 'health check-up'[2] (Govt. of India, 2020).

Although system engagement and evaluation is emerging as a key component for the effective implementation of Life Skills Education, a focused review of the literature revealed the existing gaps. While there are examples of assessment tools/mechanisms/frameworks for teachers and students, a comprehensive instrument for assessing the provisions and gaps within the education system could not be found. Thus, the need for developing a tool

that enables an overall assessment of the state education system to emerge. Designing and developing of the system's assessment tool is a pioneering effort to promote the delivery of Life Skills Education with the system's approach. The tool can also provide a blueprint for developing similar tools for other contexts, geographies and purposes.

## Tool Design

The System's Assessment Tool has been developed as a standardized Self-Assessment Scorecard for government officials in the state education system. The tool attempts to assess the preparedness of the state education system vis-à-vis Life Skills Education and its delivery at all levels - state, district, block, and school (HOS and SMC/SMDC).

Life Skills Collaborative aims to provide the state government with an assessment tool that the education system can use to assess their own level of preparedness and readiness to deliver Life Skills Education in the state. In this process, the tool will also enable the state government to identify areas that need to be strengthened for effective implementation.

The tool will assess the following outcomes:

- system's appetite (policy provisions)
- system's willingness (need, relevance, and perception)
- system's preparedness (structural and budgetary provisions)

This is a snapshot of the tool, and the thematic details for each of the above outcomes have been provided as part of the section 'Tool Development Process' in the 'structure' section of 'Step 3: Development of the System's Assessment Tool'.



## Tool Development Process

The System's Assessment Tool was developed based on a Formative Study that was necessitated by the gaps identified during the literature review. This section outlines the step-by-step process of tool development. (refer to Figure 2)

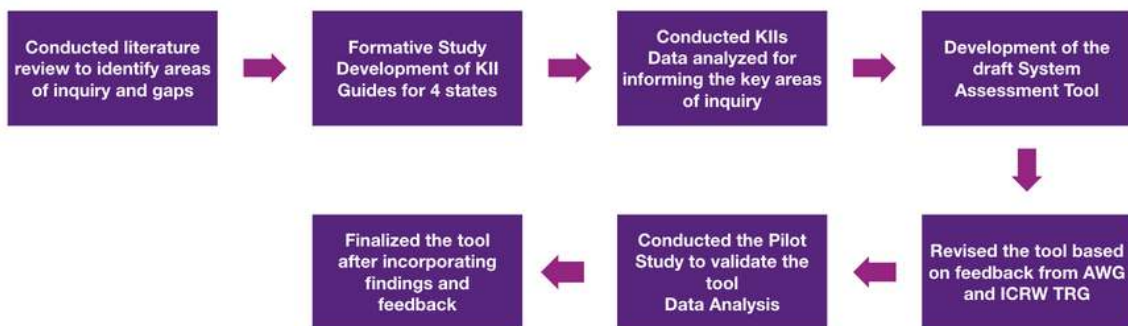


Figure 2- step-by-step process of the tool development

### Step 1: Literature Review

To understand the relevance of the system's engagement with Life Skills Education, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. The literature review also explored the system's response to the implementation of Life Skills Education in the four states of Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand. This section provides a brief description of the process.

#### a. Objective

The objective of the literature review was to identify key areas of inquiry and gaps in the development of the System's Assessment Tool.

#### b. Methodology

To ensure a focused review of the literature, the following inclusion criteria were developed for incorporating secondary resources as part of the review:

- Publication date: between 2006 - 2021
- Type of research: a) Primary research wherein an experiment was planned, implemented and the findings of the same were used to draw a conclusion, b) secondary research wherein the findings have been generated by analysing other research material, c) published research material that has been published in research journals, d) unpublished: research material that has not been published in research journals
- Nature of research: a) Academic research conducted, including documents published in peer-reviewed journals, and b) non-academic research including policy documents, news articles, blogs, poetry, impact evaluation studies, project reports and briefs, existing tools developed by practitioner organisations pertaining to systems' assessments if any
- Geographical location: Global South, Global North, India, and the four states of Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand.
- Language: English
- Keywords to include in the search: Life Skills Education, adolescents, goal setting, aspiration mapping, Social-Emotional Learning; 21st Century Skills, mental health, well-being, skill development, employability, work-readiness, resilience, and school-to-work transition, citizenship, school climate, positive youth development, government systems and Life Skills, Life Skills implementation, National curriculum framework etc.

Based on this inclusion criterion, title and abstract screening of articles was conducted to determine inclusion. After the title and abstract screening, resources were selected and subjected to full-text screening. Resources were then synthesized from a range of existing relevant databases including peer-reviewed article hosting platforms and the LSC literature resource database

### **c. Resources Reviewed**

In total, 208 resources were screened by title, out of which 159 were selected after abstract screening and out of these 111 were selected for full-text review after determining relevance. During the review, it was found that only 30 resources discussed Life Skills from a system's perspective while the rest of the resources were either focussing on the need and relevance of Life Skills for adolescents or on what constitutes Life Skills or on Life Skills from a teachers' engagement perspective. 7 out of these were global resources such as UN reports, evaluation reports, and journal articles, 4 were national documents, including NEP 2020 and National Curriculum Framework 2012 policy document, 19 were pan-India resources such as India-specific journal articles, evaluation reports, program briefs, and reviews.

The section below highlights key insights that emerged from the literature review.

### **d. Key Insights**

The review of the literature revealed that there has been a global and national shift towards Life Skills Education and key initiatives are underway. It also highlighted the emerging opportunities, key challenges at the systemic level, and the importance of a system's approach to implementing Life Skills Education. Detailed insights are given below:

#### **A shift in Life Skills Education Focus globally**

The implementation of Life Skills Education has garnered substantial focus globally over the past three decades. In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion recognised Life Skills as an essential contributor to health-based decisions, which was followed by the uniting of Life Skills and

education by the United Nations in the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 (UNICEF, 2012). Subsequently, the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education For All (EFA) assigned Life Skills Education as one of its main goals for survival, capacity development and quality of life and in the Dakar World Education Conference (2000) and Life Skills were included in two out of 6 Education for all (EFA) goals (Singh and Sharma, 2016). Since then, there have been multiple initiatives across the globe and global evaluation studies have been conducted by organizations such as UNICEF.

### **A national shift towards Life Skills Education**

Since the early 2000s, a significant increase in focus on Life Skills Education for students can be seen in India. The National Curriculum framework (2005) outlined some key recommendations and principles that referred to Life Skills Education and subsequently influenced curriculum design in central board schools (Talreja, et.al., 2018). In 2005, the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) in India appointed Life Skills Education as a key component of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation policy (Bapna, 2019). Various NCERT-related position papers such as Education for Peace and Health and Physical Education refer to Life Skills and their relevance (NCERT, 2006; NCERT, 2016). The National policy on skill development and entrepreneurship 2015 focussed on overall skill development and also promotes Life Skills Education through its approach and framework (Talreja, et.al., 2018). Finally, NEP 2020 strongly emphasizes on holistic development of students through the integration of 21st-century skills and vocational education (Govt. of India, 2020).

### **Key initiatives underway**

To support the EFA initiative, UN subsidiaries and the World Bank developed a Life Skills based education health framework,

FRESH - Focussing Resources on Effective School Health. The aim was to tackle prominent health issues, including HIV prevention, nutrition, SRH, early pregnancies, infection rates, violence, and substance abuse (UNICEF, 2012). Another key initiative is the Global Initiative on Education and HIV and AIDS (EDUCAIDS). Several countries have also enacted national initiatives for the integration of Life Skills Education. For instance, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gambia and Zambia created an assessment to learn, teach and assess 21st Century Skills (with a focus on problem-solving and collaboration) via their project Optimizing Assessment for All (Robertson, 2018). The GE Foundation Life Skills for Employability program is also being implemented in Hungary, Mexico, Poland, and India, where the emphasis is on problem-solving, effective work habits, community and environmental awareness, healthy lifestyle, diversity and service learning (International Youth Foundation, 2006). Additionally, the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) was piloted in Haiti, Jordan and Nepal along with other countries to address gender-related issues through the acquisition of Life Skills (World Bank, 2013).

In India, some of the government-implemented initiatives included the Happiness Curriculum in Delhi and subsequently in Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand (Bapna, 2019). Adolescent Education Program by MHRD with a focus on promoting healthy attitudes and the School Health program under Ayushman Bharat with a focus on emotional and mental health are some of the other key initiatives (Bapna, 2019). Additionally, several NGOs have been implementing Life Skills related programs such as Aflateen by Aflatoun, Employability and Life Skills program by Design for Change and After School Life Skills and Career Connect program by Dream a Dream (Bapna, 2019).

System's approach to implementation of Life Skills Education UNICEF's theory of change, as outlined in the Comprehensive Life Skills Framework, highlights the need for a system approach to implementing

Life Skills Education. This emphasizes that the systematic development of skills across the life course of a learner requires effective pedagogical techniques, an enabling environment at school, multiple pathways approach and individual empowerment (UNICEF, 2019). The World Bank outlines lessons learnt at the systemic level after implementing Life Skills Programs which include designation of safe spaces to create a conducive environment, capacity building of teachers/facilitators and a locally-adapted curriculum for Life Skills (The World Bank, 2013).

### **Key challenges for implementation**

Some of the challenges to implementing Life Skills Education that were found as part of the literature review include lack of clarity in understanding Life Skills, lack of teacher training and resources, a focus on exam-based learning and lack of assessment frameworks for Life Skills, including standards and guidelines (Kim and Care, 2020; Grover, 2018). Additionally, owing to the completion of the school syllabus on time, teachers consider Life Skills Education a non-academic activity and do not credit it its due importance (Suresh and Subramoniam, 2015).

### **Emerging opportunities**

The literature review also highlighted potential opportunities for the successful implementation of Life Skills Education. Identifying and funding innovations, convening entrepreneurs and practitioners, promoting research on assessments, monitoring an evaluation of programs and investing in the professional development of teachers, are a few examples (Singh and Sharma, 2016; Suresh and Subramoniam, 2015; Nasheeda, et.al., 2019)

## **e. Implications on Tool Development**

While the literature review revealed information on existing Life Skills Programs being implemented by the government and NGOs, key challenges and opportunities in this regard, it did not provide details of how the four states (Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand) are operationalizing the NEP 2020 or creating provisions to integrate Life Skills Education within the state education system. Another critical gap that emerged was the lack of any existing assessment tool or framework to assess the education system's preparedness vis-à-vis Life Skills Education.

Therefore, a formative study was undertaken with key government officials and other stakeholders in the state education system to identify essential systemic provisions required at various levels to deliver Life Skills Education.

The key areas of inquiry for the formative study were developed based on the literature review.

## **Step 2: Conducting the Formative Study**

As part of the tool development process, the formative study was expected to inform the development of a robust and contextual tool for the system's assessment. The study was designed as a qualitative enquiry using the principles of grounded theory.

### **a. Objective**

The formative study aimed to understand stakeholders' perspectives, opinions, and engagement with Life Skills education and seek their input to strengthen Life Skills education in the state. Following were the key areas of inquiry:

- Relevance of Life Skills education: Importance of Life Skills Education for adolescents, specifically in the context of individual well-being, employability, and responsible citizenship; how Life Skills Education has been defined in the state; how Life Skills Education is different from moral science, value, and vocational education
- Ongoing programs in the state/district/block/school: implementation of programs - at what level, which department/division, for which classes; evaluation of these programs; state's plan for implementation and any specific central directives
- Life Skills curricula: Skills defined and prioritized by the state specifically in the context of individual well-being, employability, and responsible citizenship; gender inclusivity; graded complexity; stand-alone subject vs integrated curriculum; contextualization and inclusivity for children with disabilities
- Current policy provisions: NEP 2020 State-task list; provisions related to curriculum framework, contextualization, and inclusivity, holistic development, student and teacher assessment opportunities; gaps and challenges
- Delivery mechanisms: budgetary allocations, teacher engagement, capacity building initiatives, research and evidence building, safe spaces, and enabling environment
- Collaboration/partnerships - Opportunities and challenges; value addition to the government by civil society organizations/non-governmental organizations/external agencies

## **b. Methodology**

To gather relevant data, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with government officials at the state, district, block and school level (Heads of Schools (HOS) and members of the School Management Committee (SMC)/School Management and Development Committee (SMDC)) along with members of CSOs/NGOs/external agencies working on Life Skills



Education in the state. To conduct these KIIs, interview guides were developed based on the literature review.

### **c. Sampling**

A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify 10-15 relevant stakeholders, including officials at the state, district, block, and school level (HOS and SMC/SMDC) per state, in view of the (existing/potential) role they play in the delivery of Life Skills Education. The process of identifying the stakeholders in each state was facilitated by the Government Engagement partners for the state. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure that the critical stakeholders were part of the sampling unit and accounted for in finalizing the tool. The purposive sampling strategy guarantees that no critical member is left out of the sampling unit.

### **d. Ethical Considerations**

The formative study was reviewed by ICRW's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as a standard practice, to ensure ethical compliance. As prescribed in the research protocol, an informed consent form in local languages was shared with the government officials to seek their consent for participating in the study. The informational consent form provided details about the purpose of the study, procedures, rights of the respondent, risks involved, and contact information if they have any questions or concerns. No personal information or identifiers were collected as part of the study to ensure confidentiality.

### **e. Conducting the study**

The research was conducted in a hybrid mode - online and in-person, due to the varying COVID-19 situation in the four states. A total of 57 KIIs were conducted across the four states of Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand (refer to table 2 for details).

State	KIIs conducted per state	Stakeholder	KIIs conducted per level
Maharashtra	15	State	4
		District and Block	6
		Heads of Schools	2
		SMC/SMDC members	2
		CSO members	1
Mizoram	11	State	6
		District and Block	1
		Heads of Schools	2
		SMC/SMDC members	2
Rajasthan	13	State	5
		District and Block	4
		Heads of Schools	2
		SMC/SMDC members	1
		CSO members	1
Uttarakhand	18	State	5
		District and Block	6
		Heads of Schools	3
		SMC/SMDC members	2
		CSO members	2

Table 1: Details of the formative study

## f. Data Analysis

To analyze the data from the Formative Study, interviews were transcribed and translated from local languages (Hindi, Marathi, Mizo) to English. Based on the interview guides, a coding tree was developed to identify key insights for each thematic area. The section below highlights key findings from the study.

## g. Key findings

While the data was analyzed for each state separately, no significant variations were found across the four states.

The data revealed that similar insights were emerging from all four states. It was found that there is a need to understand what constitutes Life Skills and how to integrate them within the education system. It was observed that while there are policy provisions for the implementation of Life Skills Education, lack of clarity on how to operationalize is a barrier to implementation. Detailed thematic insights are given below:

### **Policy Provisions for Life Skills Education**

Almost all the officials at all levels (State, District, Block, School) emphasized the relevance and need for Life Skills Education and 21st-century skills for the overall growth of students, especially in the context of NEP 2020. However, there was a lack of clarity among officials on what constitutes Life Skills and during the in-person interactions, some of them also sought an explanation for it. After explaining the definition and constituents of Life Skills, they re-emphasized its need. While officials at all levels have participated in orientations on NEP 2020, most of them used Life Skills, Vocational Skills, and Moral and Value education interchangeably.

### **Inter-departmental Coordination and Shared Decision-making**

Many officials expressed that a lack of inter-departmental coordination and communication is a challenge in implementing Life Skills Education. This was observed at various levels within and across departments/divisions. Some of them also emphasized the need for shared decision-making. Additionally, a need to build feedback platforms/avenues - both upward and downward was also highlighted.

### **Budgetary Provisions for Life Skills Education**

According to officials at all levels, the State Education System for Life Skills Education lacks relevant budgetary provisions. At the same time, they expressed the need to invest in human resources, capacity building,

necessary infrastructure, and resources to implement Life Skills Education in schools. Drawing from their experience, officials at all levels also shared that the budget (not specific to Life Skills Education) is not always received on time, leading to several implementation-related delays.

### **Life Skills Curriculum and Students' Assessments**

The study found that there was a lack of consensus on how to integrate Life Skills Education within the existing system. A few officials are of the opinion that Life Skills should be incorporated into either the existing curriculum or co-curricular activities or sports activities. However, others opined that to ensure that Life Skills are emphasized as part of the academic curriculum, it should be introduced as a stand-alone subject. Many officials acknowledged the need for developing a specific Life Skills curriculum or framework for various Life Skills activities.

Almost all officials opined that assessing students on Life Skills would ensure that Life Skills Education is taken seriously by all stakeholders including the students. Many officials also mentioned the need for contextualizing Life Skills Education by incorporating local content and community engagement (field visits, and events in the community).

In the context of Life Skills that need to be included in the curriculum, coping with stress, communication and skills that focus on workforce readiness and the mental health of adolescents, were highlighted.

Additionally, a few officials referred to the WHO skills while talking about existing Life Skills related activities. This was mentioned in the context of digital literacy classes in Maharashtra and the Anandam program in Uttarakhand.

## **Teachers' Education and Capacity Building**

While most officials were aware of the training being conducted under NISHTHA and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), many spoke about the need for rigorous teachers' training in the context of understanding Life Skills, instructional preparedness, and student engagement. According to a few officials, Life Skills Education should also be incorporated into Teachers' Education (B.Ed., M.Ed.). Many officials suggested separate training for Principals and Heads of Schools. A need for feedback mechanisms related to teachers' training at all levels was also emphasized.

## **State Collaborations with NGOs/CSOs/external agencies for Life Skills Education**

It was found that there is a need to strengthen collaborations between the state and various NGOs/CSOs/external agencies working on Life Skills Education in order to avoid duplication of efforts and streamline different projects related to Life Skills.

The Formative Study highlighted the need to operationalize relevant policy and budgetary provisions; create capacity-building initiatives for teachers and Heads of Schools; develop a curriculum framework and assessments for students; and strengthen state collaborations with NGOs to effectively deliver Life Skills Education. These key insights informed the development of the System's Assessment Tool.

## **Step 3: Development of the System's Assessment Tool**

The System's Assessment Tool is a Self-Assessment Scorecard developed separately for officials at the state, district, block and school levels (HOS and SMC/SMDC members). The tool has been designed as a Scorecard to provide a practical tool for government officials for assessing their

readiness and tracking their progress to deliver Life Skills Education at scale. The Scorecard will help provide insights into the system's preparedness across various thematic areas and identify gaps and strengths. This tool has been designed as a forward-looking instrument that can be used periodically with the same set of stakeholders to assess the progress made. The tool can also be used to motivate key stakeholders to seek more information and initiate discussion within the system vis-à-vis the delivery of Life Skills Education.

The Scorecard has been translated into local languages for each of the four states - Marathi, Mizo and Hindi. It is expected to be used both vertically across all levels and horizontally across all departments within the state education system. To make the tool easily scalable, online platforms were considered as a possible solution, owing to the universal access to mobile phones and the internet among government officials. Since most government officials used Google forms during the COVID-19 pandemic, they recommended it as the preferred study platform. Google forms also accorded anonymity and the flexibility to fill it at their own pace. Thus, the Scorecard was digitized using Google forms in local languages.

The Scorecard was reviewed and vetted by ICRW's Technical Review Group, LSC Assessment Working Group, and Government Engagement Partners (GEPs) of each state. The feedback received from these expert groups was mainly on the language of the tool, which was incorporated before conducting the Pilot Study. All language-related revisions were undertaken for each language version of the tool to ensure that questions, response options and scoring explanations are aligned and easy to comprehend. English terms were added in brackets to enable better understanding in a few places. The following section outlines the structure and scoring methodology of the tool.

## a. Structure

The Self-Assessment Scorecard is divided into six thematic sections based on the identified thematic areas for the assessment. Each thematic section has a set of single-choice questions designed to gather comprehensive information about each thematic area that influences the delivery of Life Skills Education from a system's perspective. The six thematic sections are outlined below:

**Policy Provisions for Life Skills Education:** This section assesses the level of awareness amongst officials at the state/district/block/school level and the operationalization of relevant mechanisms/provisions.

**Inter-Departmental Coordination and Shared Decision-Making:** This section assesses the level of operationalization of relevant mechanisms and platforms for inter-departmental coordination and shared decision-making. It also assesses the level of awareness amongst officials at all levels for the same.

**Budgetary Provisions for Life Skills Education:** This section assesses the level of operationalization of relevant budgetary provisions in terms of allocation, disbursement, and utilization. It also assesses the level of awareness of these amongst officials at all levels.

**Teachers' Education, Capacity Building, and Resource Material for Life Skills Education:** This section assesses the level of operationalization of relevant provisions for Teachers' Education, Capacity Building and Resource Material, and the level of awareness amongst officials at all levels.

**Life Skills Curriculum and Students' Assessments:** This section helps to determine the level at which the process of developing/integrating the Life Skills curriculum and students' assessments, is currently.

Additionally, it also assesses the level of awareness amongst officials at multiple levels within the education system.

### **State Collaborations with NGOs/CSOs/External Agencies for Life**

**Skills Education:** This section assesses the level of a collaborative effort with NGOs/CSOs/External Agencies for Life Skills Education in the state.

Additionally, it also assesses the level of awareness about collaborations amongst officials at all levels.

### **b. Scoring**

Each of the above thematic sections will be assessed on a score range indicating a low, medium, or high level of preparedness. This will support government officials to assess their own department's preparedness on various parameters that support the effective delivery of Life Skills Education in secondary schools.

The score range is based on the number of questions in that respective thematic section, with the options of 'Yes', 'Partial' or 'No' response:

**'0 - No/Don't Know**

**'1 - Partially aware/Partial operationalization'**

**'2 - Completely aware/Fully operationalized'**

Therefore, each question is scored on a scale of 0-2, 2 being the highest score that can be achieved for the question. For instance, the first thematic section, Policy Provisions for Life Skills Education, in the Scorecard for state-level officials, has a total of 14 questions with a score range of 0-28 (Low: 0-9, Medium: 10-19, High: 20-28). Scores can be calculated for each thematic section separately by adding up the scores achieved (from 0-2) for each question of that thematic section.



Since the number of questions varies for each thematic section, a separate score range with its preparedness index has been provided.

The preparedness index indicates existing provisions and gaps for the thematic section. This index will enable officials to benchmark the current preparedness and help identify areas that require further strengthening in their respective departments (Refer to table 3 for the index).

Preparedness Index	
Level of Preparedness	Explanation
Low Preparedness	This is to indicate that there is a need to create awareness amongst officials at the state/district/block/school level and/or operationalize relevant mechanisms/provisions for Life Skills Education.
Medium Preparedness	This is to indicate that while the officials at the state/district/block/school level may be aware and might have planned for operationalizing relevant mechanisms/provisions, there is a need to further take concrete steps in order to operationalize all major mechanisms/provisions for Life Skills Education.
High Preparedness	This is to indicate that the officials at the state/district/block/school level are mostly aware and are in the process of taking/having taken concrete steps to operationalize all relevant mechanisms/provisions for Life Skills Education.

Table 2: Preparedness Index for System's Assessment Scorecard

To ensure that the Scorecard is easy to comprehend, the scoring methodology is appropriate and the questions are relevant to the state context, the tool was validated through a Pilot Study conducted in the four states with government officials of the state education system. A feedback section was added to the google form to capture officials' feedback on:

- Ease of comprehension
- Length of the Scorecard
- Relevance of questions
- Appropriateness of language
- Ease of score calculation
- Appropriateness of scoring range
- Ease of comprehension of preparedness index

## Pilot Study for System's Assessment Tool Validation

The Pilot Study was conducted in three districts of Uttarakhand and five districts each of Maharashtra, Mizoram and Rajasthan. The study was conducted with state, district and block-level officials, heads of schools (HOS) and SMC/SMDC members. A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify officials within the state education system. The Government Engagement Partners (GEPs) identified the officials based on the relevance of their role in delivering life skills education in their respective states.

A sample of 40-50 officials across various levels in each state was determined to elicit their feedback and test the content validity of the tool. With support from GEPs, the Self-Assessment Scorecard was shared with government officials at all levels as a link using google Forms along with the informed consent form and a short description of the study. The GEPs also received support from the government liaison officer to mobilize key stakeholders to facilitate the tool-filling process. All officials were requested to fill out the google form.

On average, the tool in google form was kept open for data collection for 8-10 weeks. The decision to keep the tool open was based on the slow response, and the extended period enabled officials to share their responses and feedback at their pace and convenience. Thereafter, individual consultations (in-person and online) were organized with officials at the state level to invite detailed feedback and ensure a greater buy-in for adopting the tool within the state. Across the four states, a total of 137 officials filled out the form (refer to the table 3 for details).

<b>State</b>	<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Responses Received</b>
<b>Maharashtra</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>
	State	7
	District and Block	19
	Heads of Schools	5
	SMC/SMDC members	7
<b>Mizoram</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>
	State	10
	District and Block	24
	Heads of Schools	5
	SMC/SMDC members	5
<b>Rajasthan</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>
	State	8
	District and Block	28
	Heads of Schools	9
	SMC/SMDC members	8
<b>Uttarakhand</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>
	State	11
	District and Block	21
	Heads of Schools	7
	SMC/SMDC members	7

Table 3: Details of the Pilot Study for System's Assessment conducted in all four states

## Data Analysis

After completion of the data collection, the analysis of the tool was undertaken for two purposes:

1. To validate and finalise the tool
2. To examine the responses and propose a robust analysis plan

The data received on the feedback questions was analysed to determine the tool's performance on parameters such as comprehension, relevance, language, scores range, and preparedness index. Officials across states found the tool easy to understand and relevant to the state context. While several officials felt that the tool is lengthy, they all appreciated the comprehensiveness of the scorecard. They shared that this will help them understand the progress made within the system even during later years.

Most officials found it easy to calculate the scores and understand the explanation. Some state officials suggested language-specific revisions in the state-specific Scorecard and recommended adding English terms for certain technical words or phrases in brackets for ease of comprehension.

### **Data Analysis Plan:**

- Mean scores for each thematic section were calculated separately for the state, district, block and school (HOS and SMC/SMDC) level to indicate the level of preparedness (low, medium, high). Based on the indicated level of preparedness, existing provisions and areas for strengthening are highlighted.
- Additionally, mean scores for each department were calculated separately for the state, district and block level to indicate the department's preparedness (low, medium, high) across all thematic sections.

- For all levels (state, district, block, and school (HOS and SMC/SMDC), the proportion of respondents who scored 'preparedness' under the low, medium, and high in each thematic section can be calculated at a later stage using the score ranges given in the Scorecard.

As the tool is in the form of a self-assessment Scorecard, it is expected that the education system should be able to analyze the data.

The analysis plan has therefore been proposed to facilitate self-assessment of the state education system.

## Recommendations

The Self-Assessment Scorecard is intended to provide the state education system with a practical and comprehensive assessment tool that can be used to assess the system's preparedness across levels at different stages of Life Skills Education delivery. The learnings from the tool development and validation process for System's Assessment brought forth some key recommendations that can be considered for tool implementation in the state. The recommendations are as follows:

### **Using the Scorecard**

The Scorecard has been designed as a forward-looking tool whereby it can be used to measure and periodically track the state education system's preparedness and progress vis-à-vis Life Skills Education. While the preparedness of the state education system may be at varied levels, the emerging gaps can be used to initiate a dialogue within the system, identify areas for strengthening and develop a shared vision for Life Skills Education.

The Scorecard can also be used to motivate key stakeholders to build awareness and encourage collaborative planning and decision-making. The state education system can customize the Scorecard according to state context and requirements. It can be used to:

- Assess the system as a whole across all departments (horizontally) and across all levels - state, district, block, and school (vertically)
- Assess each department within the system across all levels - state, district, block and school (vertically). Within each department, all divisions/verticals must be included in the assessment
- Assess the system's preparedness for a particular thematic area by using each thematic section of the tool independently

### **Implementation at scale**

To ensure a state-wide scale-up, the following are the recommendations for implementing the tool:

- Assigning an assessment team (2-3 officials is recommended) that can spearhead the entire process within the state education system
- Organizing a goal-setting meeting with key stakeholders within the system to align on objectives, timeframe and process for administering and analyzing the Scorecard
- Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality to ensure that the officials are able to provide their honest responses without fear of reprimand or backlash
- Designating sufficient time (recommended time - 45-60 mins) for officials to fill out the Scorecard
- Designating sufficient time among the key stakeholders and decision-makers to discuss the key findings
- Developing a roadmap for addressing the emerging gaps through collective decision-making

## Summary and Way Forward

Life Skills Collaborative will work closely with the four States to explore the possibility of a state-wide scale-up. The Self-Assessment Scorecard is being made available as a public good along with other Assessment Tools developed as part of the collaborative. Additionally, the collaborative will continue to improve and build more assets for Life Skills Education in India and engage with the external ecosystem to drive the adoption of these assets to ensure the timely and effective delivery of Life Skills Education for adolescents across the country.

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## About LSC

The Life Skills Collaborative is a collective of 18 like-minded organisations. These organisations have an active interest in the Life Skills ecosystem and an inherent aspiration to bring about the positive change needed to make the Life Skills ecosystem in India thrive. They bring diverse and global expertise in education, skill development, health and gender. LSC members have a collective experience of over 300 years in designing and implementing programs and working with the government in co-creating impact.

## LSC PARTNERS

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Write to us  
[assessments@lifeskillscollaborative.in](mailto:assessments@lifeskillscollaborative.in)

Read more about our work:  
<https://lifeskillscollaborative.in/assessments-tools/>

