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**SOCIETY OF  
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IN KENYA**

## **Status of Life Skills Education Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Kibwezi Sub-County of Makueni County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

*In this millennium, education is undergoing an evolutionary change in terms of globalization, privatization and urbanization. Today's youth are facing many emerging issues such as poor academic performance, poverty, stress, unemployment among others and this leads to indiscipline and suicidal tendencies. This requires immediate and effective response from a socially responsive system of Education. The main purpose of this study was to establish the status of Life Skills Education in Secondary Schools in Kibwezi Sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya. The study was guided by three objectives: To identify the benefits of Teaching and Learning of life skills Education in Secondary Schools in Kibwezi Sub-county, to establish if life skills Education teaching and learning has been implemented as envisaged by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST), to investigate the challenges facing Life Skills Education and opportunities occasioned by the Teaching and Learning of Life Skills Education. The Study adopted a descriptive Survey design. The data was generated using information from Deans of Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Kibwezi Sub County through use of self-designed questionnaire. The researcher used systematic sampling to get the target population (where the tenth item was picked). A total of seven (7) schools were picked for this study out of 66 schools in Kibwezi Sub-County. This translated to 10% of the total population. Test-retest method was used to test reliability. This was done during piloting stage which was carried in one school. The data was collected using questionnaires which were administered by the researcher. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which was generated by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were presented in form of percentages, frequencies, tables and other graphical presentations. The findings of the study revealed that 57% of secondary schools did not have any teaching resources for life skills education and it was not taught, while the rest of schools had scanty resources and where it was timetabled it was only taught by willing teachers. The study concluded that Life Skill Education is not being taught as envisaged by Ministry of Education. Therefore, learners were missing out on the benefits of this key subject. The study recommends that life skills be made compulsory and examinable subject. This would help learners to cope with life as students and become better citizens.*

**Key Words:** *Millennium, Evolutional change, Globalization, Implementation, Curriculum, Challenges, Self-Administered*

### **Introduction**

Education has been described by The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) 2008 as the means by which individuals are equipped with knowledge, skills and values that enables them become productive citizens. Education is key in shaping both the individual and the nation. Learners in Kenyan Secondary Schools are faced by various challenges which include negative peer pressure, gender bias, violence, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, indiscipline, career choices, early marriages, rape, incest and HIV and AIDS Epidemic. It has been observed that these challenges are compounded by various factors such as complex development changes during adolescence, inadequate positive models, negative mass media influence and unreliable sources of the right information on human sexuality. This makes today's youth vulnerable to social and health risks such as HIV infections and other sexually transmitted diseases. According to WHO (2016) Majority of new infections of HIV/AIDS are among Youths below age of 24 years.

In traditional African Societies, there were proper structures and mechanisms to help the youth to develop and grow as responsible and productive members of the society. In fact, traditional African education addressed the holistic view of human personality through informal education system, with time due to historical reasons. Traditional family and education have largely broken down leaving the youth Vulnerable to many dangers.

According to (KIE 2008), in the Eastern and southern Africa Region (ESAR) there has been growing awareness that Life skills Education for children and adolescents have not been given the attention they deserve. Priority has been given to academic education. However, it has been noted that academic education without acquisition of psychological skills is an inadequate way of preparing the youth for the complex challenges that exist in today's world. There is need for the youth to be facilitated to develop positive values, attitudes, skills and healthy behavior in order to help them effectively deal with the challenges of everyday life.

Life skills education has been defined as abilities which enable an individual develop adequate and positive behavior so as to effectively deal with challenges and demands of everyday life. It is an area of learning that adopts comprehensive behavior changes approach and focuses on the development of a whole individual. Life skills education applies interactive methodology with the main goal being to enhance youths abilities to take responsibility for making choices, resisting negative pressure and avoiding risky behavior through the development of skills such as critical thinking ,problem solving ,decision making ,interpersonal relationship, stress and anxiety management ,effective communication, self-esteem and assertiveness through use of teaching and learning methods that are learner centered, youth friendly, gender sensitive, interactive and participatory.

The teaching and learning of life skills education is highlighted in several international recommendations such as the convention on the rights of the child, the international conference on population development and Education for all. The Ministry of Education has been aware of the need to adopt life skills Education as remedy to challenges facing the youth and has developed a program to address the same. This study set out to establish the status of life skills teaching and learning in secondary schools Kibwezi Sub-County of Makueni County-Kenya.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

This study was guided by the following objectives

- i. To identify the benefits of Teaching and Learning life skills Education in secondary schools
- ii. To establish if life skills education teaching and learning has been implemented as envisaged by the Ministry of Education in Secondary Schools.
- iii. To investigate the challenges facing life skills Education and the opportunities occasioned by leaching and learning life skills Education in Secondary Schools.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the teaching and learning of life skills education in secondary schools in Kibwezi Sub-County. The study employed descriptive survey which as noted by (Borg and Gall 1983) explains the characteristics of phenomena opinions of subjects, preferences, attitude and perceptions of the people of interest to the study. This design was applied in Kibwezi Sub-County which has high number of secondary schools that is Sixty-Six (66) source: sub-county Education office Kibwezi (2018). The justification to use descriptive survey was informed by the topic under investigation to establish the status of life skills teaching and learning in Secondary Schools in Kibwezi Sub-County which had to be described. This approach is in concurrence with Willis and David (2009), who pointed out that the purpose of descriptive survey is to provide numeric description of some part of population, describe and explain events as they are, as they were and as they will be.

This study was carried out in Kibwezi Sub-County, Makueni County -Kenya. The choice of Kibwezi Sub-county was informed by the researcher's professional interest in the area, guided by familiarity and accessibility to the schools. This is in conformity with the observations of Singleton (1995), that an area of study can be where the researcher has immediate rapport with respondents, also noted by Mwiria and Wamahiu (1995). Therefore, the location was ideal as it was accessible and data was collected without the participants being unco-operative or suspicious as they were familiar with the researcher as indicated by Osoro Eetala (2013)

Target population has been observed by Willis and David (2009) as the total number of subjects or the total enrolment of the interest to the researcher. This study targeted Secondary Schools in Kibwezi Sub-County, Makueni county. The Sub-County has 66 Secondary Schools both public and private. The study did not consider the categories or nature of Schools because all Secondary Schools are expected to implement life skills Education program irrespective of their nature or category. The study consisted of Seven Secondary Schools. The schools are registered by the ministry of Education and Supposed to be implementing all Ministry of Education Programmes, including life skills education. Seven schools were selected as they constituted 10.6% of the target population which according to (Gay 1992) 10%

for a large target population is acceptable in conducting research. This study made use of systematic sampling procedure which as observed by (Willis and David 2009), the researcher selects every  $n^{\text{th}}$  member of a population from a randomized list of the population. The list in this study was 66 secondary schools obtained from Sub-County Education office Kibwezi and the ninth member was every 10<sup>th</sup> schools on the list with the 66<sup>th</sup> school being picked as it was the last, making a sample size of seven schools. Data for this study was collected using one self-designed questionnaire targeted at the Dean of studies. The questionnaire was used in this study because it was concerned with variables that could not be directly observed, such as views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of respondents as pointed out by (Touliatos and Comton 1988) and as noted by (Willis and David 2009) The targeted population were the Deans of Studies in Secondary Schools who are 100% literate and unlikely to have difficulties responding to questionnaire items. The data generated from the self-designed questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics which was generated by statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Benefits of Life Skills Education**

Literature reviewed formed the basis of the study, guided by the study objectives. The world is constantly changing and learners need skills to deal and cope with life. Life skills are beneficial to learners as outlined by MacMillan (2018) in the following ways; They find new ways of thinking and problem solving recognize the impact of the actions and teaching them to take responsibility for what they do rather than blame others build confidence both in spoken skills and for group collaboration and co-operation analyze options, make decisions and understand why they make certain choices outside the classroom, develop a greater sense of self awareness and appreciate for others downloaded from 24/10/2018.<http://www.mackmillanenglish.com>.

**The Status of Life Skills Education**

This study in the background reviewed literature available at Kenya Institute of Curriculum development (KICD) and found that life skills education is a worthy area of study for learners and has evolved through various Ministry of Education initiatives. However, a reality check on the actual status of life skills Education teaching and learning has not been established. Marwanga and Matheka (2015) did an evaluation of life skills Education curriculum implementation in Nyamira District focusing on teachers’ preparedness to implement life skills education where they found out teachers had negative attitude towards life skills Education. Therefore, this study sought to establish the status of life skills Education Teaching and learning in Kibwezi Sub-County Makueni County, Kenya.

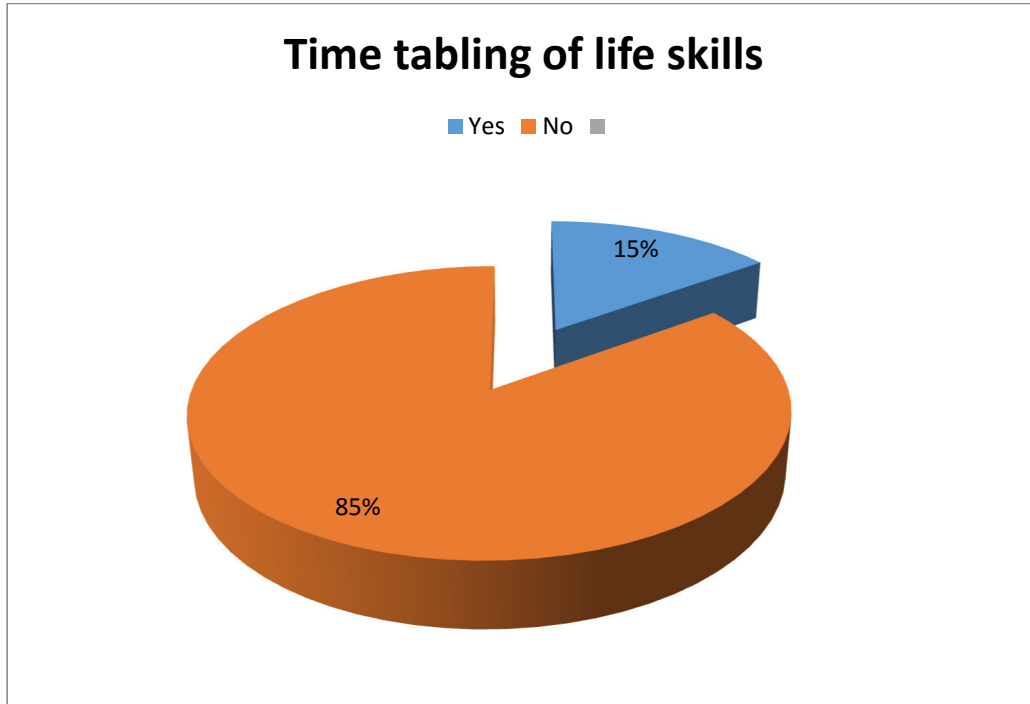
**Results and Discussion**

Table 1 Presents the benefits of the teaching and learning life skills to learners.

**Table 1: Benefits of Life skills learning**

Skills	Benefits	Percentage response (%)
Livelihood or vocational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build their self-esteem and self-confidence</li> <li>• build their assertiveness or ability to respond confidently to any situation</li> </ul>	87
Practical health related skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-knowledge leads to self-control so that people can cope with their emotions and stress.</li> </ul>	68
Conflict resolution and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of creative and critical thinking in order to be able to confront the challenges of life and make appropriate decisions on what to do and how to solve problems.</li> </ul>	87
Physical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical fitness</li> <li>- Ability to participate in different sports and games</li> </ul>	78
Skills related to behavior and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of one’s interpersonal relationships with the people around one through;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- friendship formation and adjustment to society in which they live</li> <li>- Ability to resist unhealthy pressures from adults or peers, to negotiate one’s way through difficult life situations both in interpersonal relationships and in work situations, and, where necessary, to advocate for change in the most effective manner.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	92

After carrying out computation, data showed that the training for life skills is relevant meaning that the incorporation of the subject in the secondary school’s curriculum was very relevant and essential as it had various benefits such as education, cultural, health and societal benefits to the learners. This is in agreement to the findings by the Global Evaluation, (2012), that concluded that learners were equipped with cultural, health and societal values through life skills training. The study sought to determine whether life skills were time tabled in their schools and the results are as shown in figure 1.



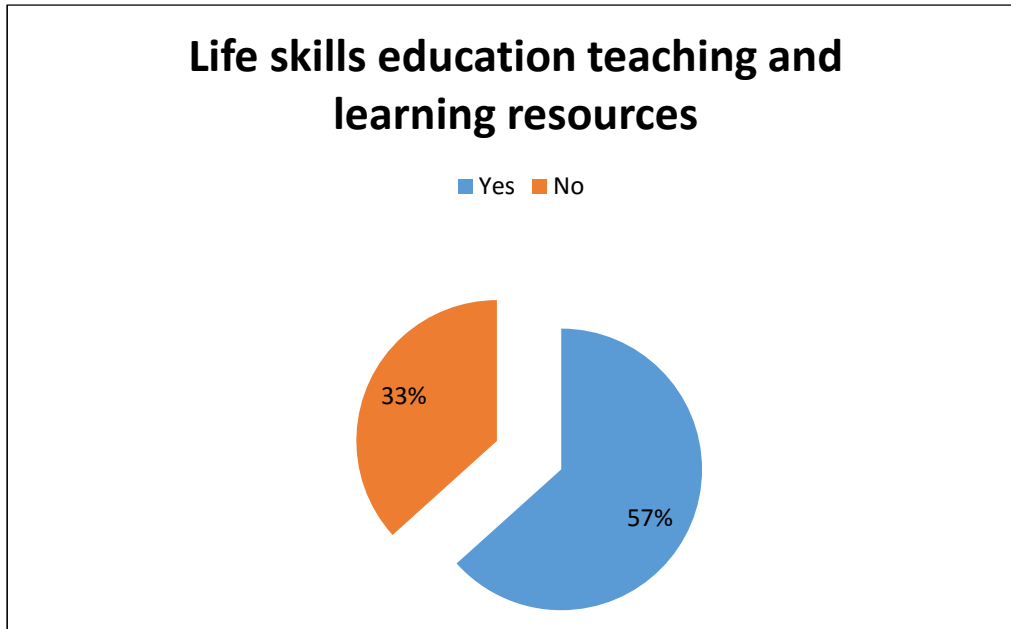
**Fig 1: Time-tabling of Life Skills**

The respondents noted that while the teaching and learning of life skills having been given such enormous emphasis by the Ministry of Education and incorporated within the secondary school’s curriculum, it had not been effectively incorporated as part of the key learning subjects in schools. It had not attracted much attention of the schools so much so that it could be incorporated in the time tables. However, other respondents (13%) maintained that the life skills lesson is part of the Physical Education lesson (PE) and is time tabled as one lesson every week for every class. Another group of the respondents, (2 %) noted that they were not sure whether the life skills lessons have had incorporated in the time table or not on the backdrop that they were not sure whether it should be explicitly considered as part of the PE lesson.

**Table 2: Life Skills Education Teaching and Learning Resources**

The study sought to determine whether there were adequate resources for teaching and learning life skills in Secondary Schools and the responses are as tabled below:

Teaching Resources	frequency	
	NO	YES
Syllabus	4	3
Textbooks	4	3
Teacher's guide	4	3



**Fig.2: Life Skills Education Teaching and Learning Resources**

Other resources that were noted by the respondents include audio visual tapes, radio broadcasting, resource persons and students' hand books. A simple majority of the respondents noted that there were life skills teaching and learning resources in their schools while a few other respondents noted that there were no such materials in their schools. While there could be resources in some schools, the respondents noted that the textbooks and other resources were inadequate and could not support any active teaching and learning among the students. According to the Ministry of Education (2008), the teaching and learning resources are sometimes very expensive and some of these maybe developed, sourced from the environment at affordable prices and with ease of convenience.

### **Challenges and Possible Solutions**

The study sought to determine the challenges and the possible solutions to the teaching and learning of life skills in secondary schools and the responses are as summarized below:

- The findings show that 55% of the respondents indicated that they had no budgetary allocations for life skills education while 45% said they had. Of the respondents who had budgetary allocations, only 33% had the life skills education resources in their schools while the majority, (57%) did not have the resources. This implies that financial resources allocated to life skills education programs are either inadequate or diverted to other activities hence lack of life skills education resources for those schools that had the allocation.
- Most of the disagreed that teachers attended in-service training for LSE and teaching/ learning materials were available at school library respectively. This implies that teachers were not adequately equipped with skills and materials required to offer the subject hence concluding that LSE was not fully implemented in schools.
- About 68% of the respondents said that there was interference by cultural and religious practices which hindered free teaching of life skills. This report can be supported by the fact that majority of the learners indicated that they felt uncomfortable when learning life skills.
- They also reported that there was inadequate supervision by education officers and there were many workshops conducted simultaneously by various organizations thus, less time to implement the activities.

### **Possible Solutions**

The researchers sought the opinion of both Dean of Curriculum and teachers on the measures that could be employed to counter the challenges to improve the life skills education. In responding to this issue, majority of the respondents (74%) indicated that resource persons should be invited to schools to talk to learners and education officers to make regular follow ups to check on the teaching of life skills education.

Another 65% of the respondents suggested that teaching of life skills be more participatory to include learner's experiences. They also suggested that facilitators should be from KIE and MOE or any other recognized body and not their fellow teachers. They also suggested that finances to be provided to support further trainings and in servicing so as to realize better results and life skills should be incorporated in the curriculum and should be made examinable.

The findings further indicated that, about 60% of the respondents said that awareness campaign should be launched to sensitize parents, community at large and other stakeholders on the value of life skills education. A few respondents, 35% suggested that training should be provided to all those involved in implementing life skills education. They further said that the youth and the peer groups should be provided with training.

A few respondents (26%) made suggestions that the government should censure and vet the programs before being aired through the media to ensure that students and other youth are protected from misleading and in appropriate information. Table 3: sought to determine Opportunities occasioned by effective teaching and learning of life skills and the results obtained were as tabled below:

**Table 3: Opportunities Occasioned by Effective Teaching and Learning of life Skills**

Area of interest	Impact
Learners' Discipline	Respondents noted that life skills would help learners develop self-discipline in regard to money, chores, homework and time management. In order to teach self-discipline, there should be consistent consequences for misbehavior. There should also be positive consequences, such as reward systems or praise for behaving responsibly. Social skills such as making eye contact and taking turns in a conversation. Set up practice sessions where kids can practice using social skills
Academic performance	Life skills would increase the level of alertness and focus among the learners, they will stay much more alert and concentrate on studies thus improve on performance.
Choice of career	The respondents noted that life skills teaching and learning exposes the students to diverse life opportunities and expand their scope with regard to their areas of interest
General life as a citizen	Life skills help students in friendship formation and adjustment to society in which they live. Ability to resist unhealthy pressures from adults or peers, to negotiate one's way through difficult life situations both in interpersonal relationships and in work situations, and, where necessary, to advocate for change in the most effective manner.

### Conclusion

Anchored on the findings of this study, our results suggested the following: That life skills are beneficial and crucial and therefore should be offered to learners in secondary schools as they live and grow in a constantly changing environment. The and life skills education will be an essential part of enabling them meet challenges of everyday. Sixty (60) percent of respondents concurred with this reasoning.

The results indicated that 57% of secondary schools did not have any resources for teaching and learning life skills education and therefore did not have the capacity to handle this crucial curriculum content. This confirms what Marwaga & Matheka (2015) concluded that teachers were not prepared to implement life skills, had negative attitude to life skills education because they did not have the tools to implement it and they were not prepared to do it. Interestingly 10% of the schools had not timetabled life skills education, and where it was timetabled life skills education, had one lesson per week. In some classes it was not all and it was taught, this was done by willing teachers and not as a requirement.

The Study gathered varied of solutions to facilitate implementation of life skills education which can be summarized as sensitization of all stakeholders, training teachers and equipping schools with life skills education resources. Since it was established by the study that life skills education is a curriculum area that can facilitate learners in several ways to become better citizens of today and tomorrow.

### Recommendations

From the conclusions arrived at, this study made the following recommendations: That all stakeholders should be sensitized on benefits of life skills education in order to create awareness and positive attitude towards life skills education. In addition, teacher should be trained to handle life skills education. That Government equips schools with life skills education resources which are inadequate or lacking in many secondary schools. This can be done through the current Government policy of supplying textbooks and other resources to schools. The study recommends that the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) increases lesson allocation for life skills to three lessons per week and that, Quality Assurance Officers to enforce its implementation right from scheming, lesson planning to actual classroom teaching by assigned teachers. In addition, life skills should be made compulsory and examinable in at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) as observed by monitoring report (KIE wiki education 2006).



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