



Life Skills-Based Prevention Education in Myanmar Secondary Schools

The School-based Healthy Living and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education (SHAPE) curriculum was officially launched in 1998. The parallel Ministry of Education Life Skills Secondary School Curriculum was subsequently launched in the year 2000, with additional topics to comply with updated School Health objectives.

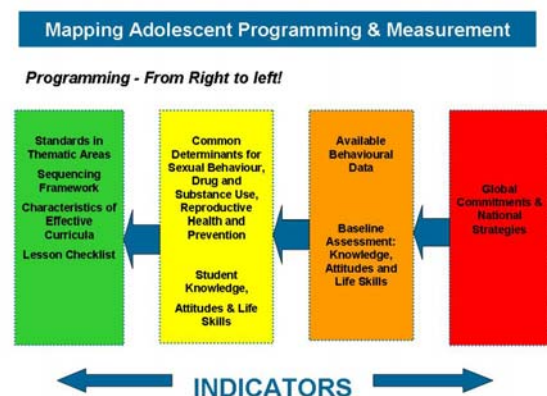
A review of the implementation of the SHAPE/MOE Life Skills curricula in 2002 found that while teachers, students, parents and members of communities found the curricula and life skills to be beneficial in the lives of students and their families, the level of skills developed by each lesson were negligible. Without changing the content of the lessons, the curriculum was updated to become competency based and include discussion guidelines, and assessment tools to put a greater focus on skills development. The pre-testing of the updated materials demonstrated that the lessons were more methodical and easier for the teachers to facilitate, while providing greater opportunities for students to participate and develop skills.

Based on recommendations from recent regional forums and global studies on Life Skills-based education the Department of Educational Planning and Training (DEPT), with the support of UNICEF and input from the School Health Department, is currently undertaking an upgrading of the curriculum, so that it will become more responsive to the needs of young people and changing health priorities, and to be linked to national goals and global commitments for health and wellbeing of young people. Simultaneously, the globally identified criteria for effective preventive curricula will be strengthened. The intended outcomes of the curriculum upgrading are:

- A unified National Secondary Life Skills Curriculum that will facilitate reporting on global and national goals and commitments;
- A curriculum grounded in psychosocial and educational theories that incorporates student experiences, addresses social pressures and focus on behaviours (behaviour development / maintenance or behaviour change);
- Clear and concise teaching and learning objectives that will help facilitate assessment;
- Expanded opportunities for the modelling and practice of skills;
- Updated accurate and appropriate information contents;
- Assessment tools that are directly linked to classroom learning

Framework for Reviewing the Existing Curriculum

The Mapping of Adolescent Programming and Measurement Framework (MAPM) was introduced in order to guide a logical review of the Life Skills curriculum in Myanmar while also guiding how a Life Skills baseline assessment would fit into the bigger picture of national and global goals and commitments.



I. Meeting Global Commitments and National Strategies

The provision of life skills-based education and the development of life skills among young people are key indicators in many of Myanmar's global commitments and national strategies. Establishing clear objectives and concise teaching and learning activities in the curriculum with these in mind will facilitate reporting on the progress toward achievement. The goals and commitments that concern Life Skills-based education are:

Global Commitments

Education for All

- **EFA Goal 3:** "Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes"
- **EFA Goal 6:** "Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills"

World Fit for Children & UNGASS

- By 2005 ensure that at least 90% and by 2010 at least 95% of young men and women 15-24 have access to information, education, including peer education and the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection to develop life skills.

Millennium Development Goal 6

Target 7

- Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Indicator

- Percentage of schools with teachers who have been trained in **life skills-based HIV education** and who taught it during the last academic year

National Strategies

Myanmar School Health Guidelines

- Using a variety of strategies, School Health Education activities should include: communicable diseases, nutrition promotion, and environmental sanitation.
- The Health Education activities should be supported by Life Skills education to develop appropriate health behaviours.

Myanmar National Strategic Plan, HIV & AIDS

High priority

- Reducing HIV-related risk, vulnerability and impact among young people

Impact/Outcome Targets

- Percentage of youth who correctly identify the three common ways of preventing HIV transmission
- Percentage of youth who reject misconceptions
- Percentage of youth expressing accepting attitudes

Output/Coverage Targets

- In-school youth (10-16) reached by life skills programmes
- Percentage of schools with teachers who have been trained in life-skills-based HIV education and who taught it during the last academic year

Child Friendly Schools: Life Skills & CFS

- “Skills based health education to develop knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills relevant to the life and context of students”
- Life Skills the entry point for CFS in Secondary Schools [*Regional Workshop on Child-Friendly Schools 2004, Yangon*]

II. Behavioural Data

With limitations in the availability of behavioural data, greater attention will be given to priorities set in the global commitments and national strategies. For example, in the development of lessons, greater emphasis will be placed on meeting the goals and priorities identified in the National Strategic Plan for Adolescent Health and Development:

III. Determinants & the Life Skills Baseline Assessment

A life skills baseline assessment was conducted among both SHAPE project schools and schools

implementing the MOE Life Skills curriculum in 2006. The assessment looked at levels of knowledge, attitudes and life skills among students and the identification of mechanisms of support in all of the schools and communities selected. Analysis has revealed that behaviours related to tobacco, alcohol, other drug and substance use, and sexual behaviour may begin before a year or two earlier than respective lessons are introduced in the curriculum. Lessons in these areas will now be introduced before students are introduced to these behaviours.

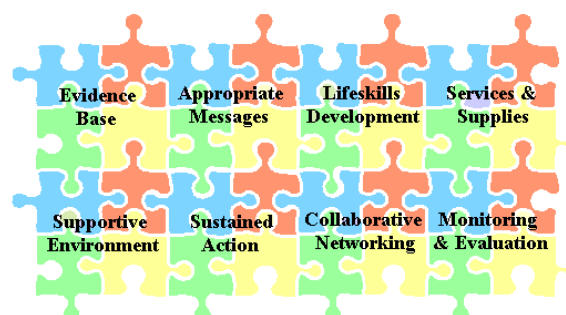
IV. The Curriculum and Lessons

A number of the lessons in the current curricula remain useful. However, the objectives of the lessons, the level of child-centred learning, and the opportunities for life skills development will be strengthened.

Lessons in thematic areas will be guided by objectives or standards based on the evidence that is available and the National goals and commitments pertaining to each thematic area. The thematic areas are: social skills, emotional intelligence, disease prevention, environment and sanitation, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, and prevention of drug and substance use.

Lessons will be structured according to the existing format, but with specific knowledge and skills objectives, discussion guidelines, and linkages to the assessment tools.

The Curriculum, Not the Complete Solution



The curriculum is only one part of the of the Life Skills programming efforts. Linkages between curriculum with existing behavioural studies are being made while greater emphasis is being placed on monitoring and evaluation.

Linkages are also being strengthened with parents, communities, and support services. The curricula at the primary and secondary levels have become compulsory and the training of teachers occurs in pre-service education and supported by in-service training workshops.

The upgraded secondary life skills curriculum will be in all schools by 2010.

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