

I. What are Life Skills (ምምንባር ብሚላ)?

Life skills are:-

-the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

-a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge (ፍልጠት), attitude (ኣረኣኢያ) and skills (ሚላ)".

Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. Most development professionals agree that life skills are generally applied in the context of health and social events. They can be utilized in many content areas for instance:

1) Stress prevention

Many health problems are caused or exacerbated by stress, including:

- Pain of any kind,
- Heart disease,
- Digestive problems,
- Sleep problems,
- Depression (ቅዠነት),
- Obesity (ልዕሊ ዓቕን ክስዓ ነብሲ),
- Autoimmune diseases (A large group of diseases in which the immune system recognizes the body's own tissues as foreign and attacks them),
- Skin conditions, such as eczema (ሳሓ ከምሳዕቤነ ይቆስል ይሕርፍፍን ይሰባበርን),
- Suicide

2) Coping with Emotions

- An emotion is a feeling such as happiness, love, fear, anger, or hatred, which can be caused by the situation that you are in or the people you are with.
- the part of a person's character that consists of their feelings, as opposed to their thoughts

3) Addictions:

- Drug Addiction
- Alcoholism
- Smoking
- Gambling Addiction
- Internet Addiction

The definition extends into consumer education, environmental education, peace education or education for development, livelihood and generation, among others. In short, life skills empower young people to take positive action to protect themselves and promote health and positive social relationships.

II. What are the Core Life Skill Strategies and Techniques?

The ten core life skill strategies and techniques are

Problem solving, (ጸገማት ምፍታሕ)

Critical thinking, (ዘዋዋይ ሐሳብ)

Effective communication skills, (ወጽኢታዊ ሜላ አቀራርባ አዘራርባ)

Decision-making, (ውሳኔ ምውሳኔ)

Creative thinking, (ፈጠራዊ አተሐሳስ)

Interpersonal relationship skills, (ወሕሰ-ል ናይ አቅራቢ ሜላ)

Self-awareness building skills, (ነፍሰ ምፍላጥ)

Empathy, (አብ ነፍሱ ካልኦት ምእታው)

Coping with stress and emotions (ተጸዋርነት ነጸቆጥን ስምዒታትን)

Self-awareness (ርእሰ-ምፍላጥ), self-esteem (ርእሰ-ምክባር) and self-confidence (ርእሰ-ተአማማንነት) are essential tools for understanding one's strengths and weaknesses.

Consequently, the individual is able to discern available opportunities and prepare to face possible threats. This leads to the development of a social awareness of the concerns of one's family and society. Subsequently, it is possible to identify problems that arise within both the family and society.

With life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others.

Life skills enable effective communication, for example, being able to differentiate between hearing and listening and ensuring that messages are transmitted accurately to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretations.

III. What are the Main Components of Life Skills?

The main components of Life Skills are categorized into the following three components:

- a) **Critical thinking/Decision-making skills** - include
 - Decision-making, Problem solving skills and Information gathering skills.
 - The individual must also be skilled at evaluating the future consequences of their present action and the actions of others.
 - They need to be able to determine alternative solutions and to analyze the influence of their own values and the values of those around them.
- b) **Interpersonal Communication skills** - include
 - Verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and the ability to express feelings and give feedback.
 - Also in this category, are *negotiation/refusal skills* and *assertiveness skills* that directly affect one's ability to manage conflict. Empathy, which is the ability to *listen and understand others' needs*, is also a key interpersonal skill.
 - Teamwork and the ability to cooperate include expressing respect for those around us. These skills result in the acceptance of social norms that provide the foundation for adult social behaviour.
- c) **Coping and self-management skills** - refers to skills to increase the internal locus of control, so that the individual believes that they can make a difference in the world and affect change. Self-esteem, self-awareness, self-evaluation skills and the ability to set goals are also part of the more general category of self-management skills. Anger, grief and anxiety must all be dealt with, and the individual learns to cope with loss or trauma. Stress and time management are key, as are positive thinking and relaxation techniques.

Thus promotes the understanding that the life skills approach can be successful, if the following are undertaken together:

- a) **The Skills** - This involves a group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills (described in section 3) which are interlinked with each other. For example, decision-making is likely to involve creative and critical thinking components and values analysis.
- b) **Content** - To effectively influence behaviour, skills must be utilized in a particular content area. "What are we making decisions about?" Learning about decision-making will be more meaningful if the content is relevant and remains constant. Such content areas as described could be stress, emotions, addiction, suicide prevention or sexual abuse. Whatever the content area, a balance of three elements needs to be considered: knowledge, attitudes and skills.
- c) **Methods** - Skills-based education cannot occur when there is no interaction among participants. It relies on groups of people to be effective. Interpersonal and psychosocial skills cannot be learned from sitting alone and reading a book. If this approach is to be successful, all three components, life skills, content and method should be in place. This effectively means that life skills can be learnt through the use of certain methods and tools.