

**LIFE SKILLS IMPACT
ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE**



Save the Children



Save the Children

LIFE SKILLS

**Life skills impact on personal
and professional development
of young people**

Informative booklet for youth

The publication of this booklet was made possible by Save the Children

Save the Children is a world leading and independent children's organization. We believe that every child deserves a good future. Across the world and in Albania, we help children to have a good life start, opportunities to learn and protection from any kind of danger. We do our best for the children - every day and in times of crisis - to bring changes in their lives and common future.

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**LIFE SKILLS IMPACT ON
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG
PEOPLE**



“Life skills” is a useful material for all young people, which provides information and guidance on:

- a) basic life skills, with a long-term impact on personal and professional life;
- b) habits to adapt to constant changes of social and economic conditions and situations, c) opportunities for successful future employment.

Skills for Life brochure help young people to reach adulthood successfully. This period of life can be a challenging experience, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity or background. Young people who do not have family or social support find it more difficult to overcome the various circumstances they may encounter on their journey to independence.

To acquire these skills and become independent in their lives, young people must work diligently and consistently in order to face the daily challenges, likes and dislikes, different opinions, and attitudes. They need to be motivated to work on their strengths and to overcome their weaknesses, in order to foster positive and sustainable change, as well as to meet employment requirements.

To adjust the information in this booklet, and to make it as understandable as possible for all young people when reading and absorbing it, young people were engaged, aged 16 to 20, previously trained on ‘Skills for Life’, and beneficiaries of Youth Empowerment project. They shared their thoughts, experiences, feelings, and suggestions on life skills and experience gained during their participation in that project.

“

**Mind is not a vessel to be filled,
but a fire to be kindled!”**

Introduction



Have you ever felt like you are not able to manage difficult situations?



Have you felt difficulties to express what you want and have you encountered conflicts and arguments often?



Do you find it difficult to find the right answers, take decisions and know how to act?

It seems as if you are prepared for everything, but actually you do not feel ready to face everything that life throws on you. These moments of insecurity cause stress, anger and low self-esteem. They reflect the inability to maintain relationships and to resist social and peer pressure.

In life you need to think about choices that may affect your future.

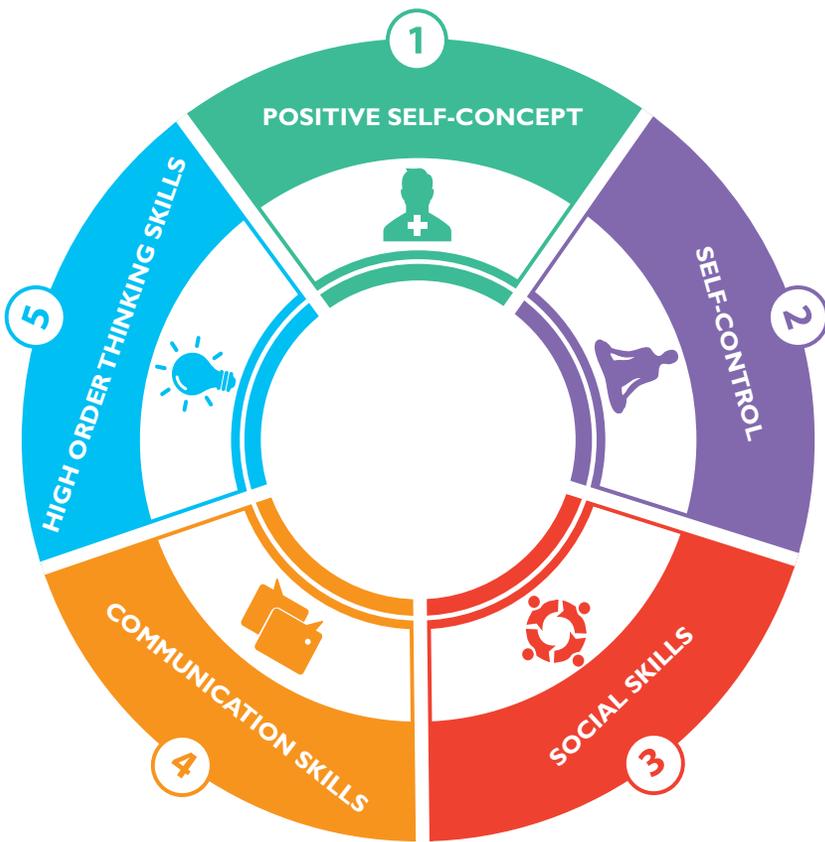
For the abovementioned reasons, life skills are important to face daily challenges as well as they help you to plan, think, and make decisions about your career, more seriously and in a more organized way.

Around the world and in Albania it is noticed that the number of job positions is changing; the tasks required for these positions are evolving continuously, while employees too are changing their job positions often. Therefore, the skills are no longer referred only

to job-specific knowledge, but to a set of features needed to cope in life situations and in those job positions that are quite complex.

In Albania and in other countries, employers report that they highly appreciate the skills needed for these new job positions, which are not only related to basic academic knowledge and technical skills but also to advanced cognitive skills (including critical thinking, efficiency, and leadership) and a set of behaviors, attitudes, characteristics, and values (collectively referred to as socio-emotional skills), including honesty, teamwork, punctuality, and responsibility.¹ Life skills prepare you to compete, to cope with job difficulties, to work well with others, and adjust to any work environment.

In this booklet you will learn more about the importance of life skills and why they should be acquired:



1. World Bank, Thoughts and Behaviors at Work, 2016.

01

Positive
Self-concept

The concept of ourselves is the image we have of ourselves. It is what we think we are and the visualization we think others have of us. This image develops in different ways, but is especially influenced by the interactions we have with important people of our lives².

➤ How does a positive self-concept increase employment opportunities?

A *positive self-concept* helps us make better use of opportunities and we better cope with rejections. It affects how we adapt to the place of work³, how we treat people and how much we achieve. Also, this concept makes others believe in our reasoning and judgment and offers us opportunities to build more effective interpersonal and professional relationships.

- ❖ (Communication - the ability to communicate effectively with a range of people, express and elaborate ideas.)
- ❖ (Social skills - include respect, appropriate behavior, empathy, tolerance)
- ❖ (Thinking skills - problem solving, critical thinking and decision making.)
- ❖ (Self-control - the capacity not to fall for complacency, to control impulses, manage time properly, focus one's mind and adjust one's behavior.)
- ❖ (Positive self-concept - being aware of one's strengths and potential: a) emotional (self-esteem and self-confidence), b) social (appropriate self-behavior) and c) cognitive (aware of one's strengths and capabilities.)

To promote a *positive self-concept*, we need to focus on:



1.1 Self-esteem

It is the way we see ourselves and how think about it. This imagination (assessment) for us is formed by all the experiences and relationships we have had and it largely influences the important aspects of our lives, such as: success, relationships, and career.⁴

2. Cherry, K., What is Self-Concept and How Does It Form?; Very well Mind, 2018.

3. McGrath. E., Self-estimation at work; Psychology Today (AL), 2001.

4. Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum. Retrieved from: www.path.azureedge.net/media/documents/CP_kenya_KARHP_curric_3-06.pdf

A healthy self-esteem helps us:

- to have self-confidence and be able to face constructive criticism;
- to feel better about ourselves and our abilities;
- to stand for our beliefs and ideas;
- to fight for achieving what we want;
- to set personal limits;
- to create healthy and supportive relationships;
- to take calculated risks and pursue our passion;
- to use “I can do it” approach.

➤ **Why do employers value employees who have a good self-esteem?**

Employers want to see positivity and skills. A healthy self-esteem would help us become the preferred candidate for a good job position. Imagine a job interview in which people are hired not only on the basis of education and experience, but also on the level of self-confidence to get the job done. Self-esteem would also help us seize job opportunities and achieve our goals. An individual who has self-confidence, is always leading and motivating.⁵

“

At school, we learn more about theory rather than practicing. In order to boost self-esteem, practice is needed.”

Gloria, 21 years old, Shkodra

5. Career success for newbies. Positive development of self-esteem in the workplace. Retrieved from: www.career-success-for-newbies.com/positive-self-esteem-development.html



“

Don't compare **yourself with anyone** in this world. If you do so, you are insulting yourself.”

(Bill Gates)



1.2 The value of being oneself



The story of our life shows not only what has happened to us in the past, but also the reasons why that were important, what does it mean to that person; that is, who he/she will become and what will happen next. It is very important that we share our story with others. The way we talk about the events of our lives profoundly affects our personality.⁶

Sharing our story with others helps us to:⁷

- discover ourselves and work to improve it over time;
- find people who support us;
- inspire or help others with similar stories;
- accept each-other for who we are and establish honest relationships;
- understand different points of view;
- show personal strengths.

6. To live emotionally resilient. The empowering effect of sharing your story. Retrieved from: www.emotionallyresilientliving.com/empowering-effect-sharing-story

7. Peace Corps. Life Skills Manual, 2001. Retrieved from: www.files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/M0063_lifeskillscomplete.pdf



“

Some **young people** realize or figure out that they are not in the possession of model's skills and they consider those as their flaws. **They are afraid of what others will think of them.**”

Emiliano, 22 years old, Shkodra



02

Self-control

“

The secret of going ahead is getting started.”

(Mark Twain)

Self-control means mastering and controlling our emotions, words, actions, impulses, desires, as well as commitment in achieving goals. Self-control brings benefits in all kinds of situations, from school benches to the workplace, as it helps us achieve more. Those who manage their emotions and reactions often have successful professional and personal relationships.⁸

Self-control helps us to:

- feel a kind of realization when achieving a goal;
- enjoy the trust of others;
- feel safe when faced with unexpected problems;
- easily forge and maintain our friendships;
- control emotional reactions;
- avoid the feeling of helplessness and being too dependent on others;
- improve self-esteem, inner strength and personal will.

➤ Why do employers value self-control?

Exercising self-control in a workplace can lead to healthier and more productive relationships. People who have self-control can better manage difficult situations at work. They control their emotions and thoughts and take the time to better analyze challenges. They also manage time better, perform better and are more focused during working hours. This element is important for good performance.⁹

A self-controlled attitude is necessary. Which cases show that we have a good self-control?

8. Skills you need. Self-control/Self-mastery. Retrieved from:www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/self-control.html

9. Graziadio Business review. Self-control at work, 2013. Retrieved from:www.gbr.pepperdine.edu/2013/12/self-control-at-work/



2.1 Maintaining a positive attitude

When someone communicates aggressively and evasively, they may have difficulty managing emotions or behaviors and provoke reactions that may jeopardize the relationship or situation. These communication styles can turn positive opportunities into uncomfortable circumstances and situations.

Attack - people of aggressive communication can use hurtful words and do not take into account the thoughts and feelings of others. To control aggressive communication, we need to actively listen and reflect more, be empathetic, and choose the right reactions. On the other hand, responding to anger, which is what aggressive people verbally express, does us no good. We need to let the aggressive person know that we are willing to listen only if he calms down, in order to speak normally.¹⁰

Avoidance - By ignoring our thoughts, feelings, needs and desires we lack self-respect. We need to approach others with more confidence and express our feelings, before they accumulate and become a source of stress and weakness. By expressing our opinion, others will understand that we respect ourselves and value our thoughts and beliefs.¹¹

➤ How do communication styles affect our job?

If we avoid communication at work, we cannot express our ideas, we do not challenge others when they make mistakes, and we do not let people know our achievements. This idleness is not an appropriate communication style in the workplace. Meanwhile, displaying aggressivity excludes cooperation with others and can damage workplace climate. Everyone likes to be close, to share the workplace and the workload with someone who is direct, honest, receptive, responsible and spontaneous.

10. Skills you need. What is aggression? Retrieved from: www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/aggression.html

11. Peace Corps. Life Skills Manual, 2001



2.2 Using the accurate messages

Helps to clearly express one's thoughts and influences cultivating habits of conflict resolution by showing respect.

Accurate messages help us to:

- feel good about ourselves and others;
- express positive and negative ideas and feelings in a direct way;
- establish mutual respect with others;
- increase our self-esteem and reduce anxiety;
- minimize hurting other people;
- take decisions and make free choices in life.¹²

➤ Why do employers value accurate communication?

By being correct, in most cases, we can achieve what we want. Correct behavior can be the reason to benefit in different situations, as it helps us to better understand the circumstances, to choose appropriate language, to have self-confidence and to focus on the most important things.¹³

“

Usually, young people are paid less than the work they do. **We should not be afraid to ask.** There are people who are afraid to speak. I have started to work in a boutique when I was 19. **“Because I conveyed trust to my employer, she soon offered me the position of boutique manager.”**

Xhenisa, 22 years old, Shkodra.

12. PATH Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum, 2006.

13. Veterans Employment Toolkit Manual. Learning to communicate safely at work. Retrieved from: www.va.gov/vetsinworkplace, 2013.





2.3 Group problem management



Means uniting all decision-making skills and opinions to solve a common problem.¹⁴

Group problem management helps us to:

- increase self-confidence;
- establish different ways of thinking;
- bring team members closer together;
- establish good relations and friendly social climate;
- learn to respect change;
- develop problem-solving skills;
- improve our group communication habits;

14. Peace Corps. Life Skills Manual, 2001

➤ **Why do employers value this ability?**

Failure to contribute to group problem solving is not favored in the work environment. This attitude can make colleagues distrust you and consider you unfriendly. Collaborating with colleagues is the key to success and growth, and it also helps us to learn more and discover new ideas.

“

Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss **contains its own seed**, its own lesson on how to **improve performance next time.**”

(Malkom X)





A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white lab coat and white gloves, is smiling and holding a magnifying glass over his right eye. The lab coat has two logos: one on the left chest with two blue figures and the text 'Hemé për Fëmijët' and 'Kërkimi dhe Shërbimi Shëndetësor', and another on the right chest with a red shield and the text 'Sa the Çdren'. The background is a blurred pink wall with a framed picture.

03

Social skills

Social skills are behaviors and other forms of communication necessary to establish and maintain relationships. To be independent, first of all, we must be able to cope in social situations that involve skills for daily life such as: breaking the ice in conversations, making friends or efficient management of bullying.¹⁵

Social skills help us to:

- increase social welfare;
- cooperate and communicate with others;
- manage stressful situations and properly resolve conflicts;
- build a strong and friendly character;
- be sensitive and empathetic;
- build trust;
- be tolerant;
- react in appropriate social and non-aggressive ways.¹⁶

➤ **Why do employers value social skills?**

Social skills are important in the labor market due to the need for cooperation. They are among the most important personal qualities and still continue to be the key to getting along with others. Almost every job position requires good social skills. If we are to work in a team, we must have good give and take with others. If we are going to work directly with clients, we need to listen carefully to what they say.¹⁷

Social skills are related to several factors, such as:

15. Skills you need. What are social skills? Retrieved from: www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/social-skills.html

16. National Association of School Psychologists. Social Skills: Promoting Positive Behavior, Academic Success, and School Safety, 2002. Retrieved from: www.hcps.org/departments/docs/student-services/psychology/socialskills_rk.pdf

17. Harvard Newspaper. Strong social skills increasingly valuable to employers, 2017.

3.1 The way of behaving and reacting in aggressive and passive situations.

As individuals, we often dress, show, communicate and express ourselves in various ways. The way we convey our thoughts to others affects our relationships and social support.¹⁸



Correct communication - allows us to express our feelings, beliefs and opinions in a way that respects and does not harm the rights of others. Correct communicators use actions and words to express their boundaries in quieter ways. When we communicate correctly, our behavior is not threatening or judgmental and we take responsibility for our actions. This helps us establish honest relationships with others, with less anxiety and resentment. It also helps us to have more control over our lives and reduce the feeling of being powerless.¹⁹

Some advantages of correct communication

Correct communication helps us:

- achieve our goals;
- not to be abused by others;
- maintain self-control;
- increase job satisfaction;
- gain a positive feedback from correct behavior in the workplace.

18. The Better You Institute. Communication Style, 2018. Retrieved from www.thebetteryouinstitute.com/2017/11/21/communication-style/

19. Peace Corps. Life Skills Manual, 2001.

Aggressive communication – people often misunderstand correctness with aggression. Aggression does not involve respect for others and ignores the needs, feelings, opinions and ideas of everyone, thus endangering the safety of others. When we communicate aggressively, we do not provide a solution to our problems or conflicts; it can end up worsening our social relationships, making others react more harshly to us. This can reduce opportunities for social support and healthy relationships.²⁰

What are some of the attributes of an aggressive communicator?

Usually they:

- express thoughts in a way that intimidate others;
- violate the rights of others;
- do not take into account the views of others;
- hurt the feelings of others;
- display unpleasant reactions.

Passive communication – is the kind of communication according to which one idly reacts to situations, avoiding the need to express feelings. When fearing conflicts, we often avoid giving opinions and are passive. But passive communication can deprive us of socialization and from establishing mutual relations. This behavior leads us to self-isolation and makes us feel like we have no social support

What are some of the characteristics of a passive communicator?

Usually they:

- attract negative friendship experiences.
- feel inferior to others;
- let others take responsibility and make decisions for them;
- do not express thoughts or feelings;
- are not present in group situations;
- reflect low self-esteem;
- have a body language that may include covering their mouth, looking down, avoiding eye contact, and crossing arms.

20. PATH Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum, 2006

➤ What do employers value the most?

Correct behavior in the workplace often brings positive feedback. Employers expect to identify a correct attitude in their employees. This attitude is important; as it directly affects the way you communicate and interact with others. It also helps you build good relationships and think and reflect clearly.

“

My family considers me as a **source of information** and what I say is taken very seriously. **Life Skills have helped me a lot.**”

Gloria, 21 years old, Shkodra

“

When I talk to my sisters, I think twice before I speak, because **in the family they have me as a model** and I am also a **motivator** for them.”

Xhenisa, 22 years old, Shkodra



“

Our life **begins to end** the day we become silent **about things** that matter.

Martin Luther King Jr



3.2 Drug and alcohol use.

The use of such substances can cause problems for young people. They can give rise or worsen mental and physical health problems, promote bad relationships between peers, cause incidents and increase stress in the family. Young users may have various problems throughout their life, such as: substance abuse, social and financial difficulties. Substance abuse is a harmful pattern of the use of tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs and drugs prescription, which leads to damage or desperate situations.²¹

*Why do young people abuse on drugs and alcohol?*²²

There are several factors that affect such a case:

- Peer pressure; we can try them, as we want to fit in with friends or certain groups; out of fear of looking “weak” in front of friends;
- feeling of insecurity or lack of self-esteem;
- Belief it makes users look like adults;
- media influence;
- As an escape to avoid adolescence tensions;
- Family or community circumstances: living with parents who use drugs or the presence of drugs in the community where we live or work.

➤ **How does the use of alcohol and drugs affect our work?**

Alcohol and drug policies in the workplace set out employer’s regulations that ban the use of drugs and alcohol at work. The use of drugs and alcohol in the workplace is strictly forbidden. Employees are obliged to responsibility care for their own safety and health, as well as to not endanger the safety of others. The effects of alcohol and drugs greatly influence our behavior at work. If drug and alcohol use affects a person’s habit to control himself and carries a risk of injury, illness, or inability to perform properly, then this turns

21. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Overview of Alcohol Consumption, 2017. Retrieved from:www.niaaa.nih.gov/overview-alcohol-consumption

22. Institute for social research University of Michigan. Monitoring the Future. Top Findings on Adolescent Drug Use, 2019. Retrieved from:www.cdn.ymaws.com/www.fadaa.org/resource/resmgr/files/resource_center/mtf-overview2019.pdf

into a problem. Being under the influence of drugs/alcohol, we can behave unprofessionally at work, consequently damaging our performance and relationships.²³



3.3 Understanding adolescence.

Between childhood and adulthood, we experience a transitional phase: adolescence. In this period of life, we are no longer children, but we are not even adults. Our body changes rapidly and we experience significant physical, psychological, and spiritual changes. During the adolescence years (10-19 years old), we must learn to set priorities, responsibilities and build our relationships.²⁴ In this period we are tormented²⁵ by issues such as:

- ▣ lack of information about the physical changes that occur to our body;
- ▣ lack of information about sex and sexuality;
- ▣ insufficient family support;
- ▣ great need for security and support;
- ▣ lack or inadequacy of curriculum on adolescent health issues;
- ▣ lack of opportunities for entertainment, creativity and employment;
- ▣ low self-esteem, social oppression, pressure and depression;
- ▣ menstrual and early unprotected sex issues;
- ▣ health problems related to eating disorders, malnutrition and anemia;
- ▣ transition from dependence to independence.

23. Canadian Center for Occupational Safety and Health. Substance use in the workplace, 2005. Retrieved from:www.ccohs.ca/

24. Institute for reproductive health. My Changing Body: Body Literacy & Fertility Awareness for Young People 2003. Retrieved from:www.irh.org/resource-library/my-changing-body-body-literacy-fertility-awareness-for-young-people-2nd-edition/

25. Adolescent Health Center at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The Teen Years Explained: A Guide to Healthy Adolescent Development, 2009. Retrieved from: [www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-adolescent-health/_includes/_pre-redesign/Interactive%20 Guide.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-adolescent-health/_includes/_pre-redesign/Interactive%20Guide.pdf)

What do you need most in this period?

- ▣ Proper parental guidance and counseling educators;
- ▣ Safe, harmless and supportive environment;
- ▣ Information about the changes you will face every day;
- ▣ Opportunities for entertainment, creation and employment.

❖ Regulation on working age for young people

There are laws and regulations which determine the legal age of young people to work. These legal documents ensure that they do not do jobs that endanger or harm their health and guarantee that education remains their focus. For children under 16, work is prohibited. Young people of that age can engage in vocational courses, in which they become acquainted with the practices of part-time work and learn better about the professions they have chosen. Meanwhile, 16-year-olds can be employed without time restrictions in any job that is not dangerous for them. Once they turn 18, young people are free to choose any employment opportunity they like.²⁶



26. Labor Code of the Republic of Albania no.7961 / 1995, last amended by law no.136 / 2015; §22 of no.10347/2010. On protection of children's rights".



“

These sessions have taught me a lot in some aspects, such as **fostering cooperation with each other, communication skills, or developing self-confidence.** But what I would single out, is the development of some practical skills related to **good income management and investment.**”

Artenis, 18 years old, Cërrik



3.4 Taking care of the body and the mind

Proper self-care is vital to our well-being and success. Physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing are interrelated and support of each other. If we take care of all aspects of our body, we can have a better well-being.²⁷

Taking care of ourselves is helping us to:²⁸

- ▣ reduce stress levels;
- ▣ focus on accomplishing daily tasks;
- ▣ increase personal satisfaction;
- ▣ have a stronger heart, body and mind;
- ▣ increase life quality and expectations;
- ▣ have positive self-esteem;
- ▣ get to know new people more easily and socialize.

How does caring for the body or mind affect our work?

Any kind of work requires us to be healthy, not only physically but also mentally and emotionally. Work requires our full devotion and attention. A healthy and active lifestyle helps us to perform better and be more fruitful and efficient at work. A healthy person is more positive and not easily stressed out; he/she is more competitive and effective.



3.5 Understanding sexuality.

Sexuality is the process of life continuity; thus, it is the ability to reproduce. It includes attitudes and behaviors that make sexual intercourse healthy, both physically and emotionally. During adolescence both the body and the feelings change.²⁹

27. Skills you need. Caring for your body. Retrieved from: www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/healthy-body.html

28. The Adolescent Health Center at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The teen years explained: A guide to healthy adolescent development, 2009. Retrieved from: www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-adolescent-health/_includes/_pre-redesign/Interactive%20Guide.pdf

29. PATH Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum, 2006.

Sexuality is much more than sexual feelings and sexual intercourse. It affects a person's sexual identity, which can be shaped by the social environment to which that person is exposed.

The feelings we may have about sexuality are:

- ▣ fear and disappointment;
 - ▣ uncertainty;
 - ▣ embarrassment;
 - ▣ confusion;
 - ▣ shame;
 - ▣ guilt;
 - ▣ curiosity;
 - ▣ pleasure or pride.

What might we face?

- **Lack of information** – at school or at home we're not taught about sexuality.
- **Misinformation** – we get information from our friends, elder sisters or brothers, from music and magazines, which can mislead and confuse us.
- **Portraying sex as romantic and hassle** – free from these sources, where it seems like this action simply happens, without discussing whether or not we should have sex.
- **Rare discussions** – about whether or not to use condoms, and about the risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease, or unwanted pregnancy.

Consequences of unprotected sexual behavior:³⁰

- Unplanned pregnancy;
- Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV;
- School dropout;
- Failure to achieve goals and loss of opportunities for the future;
- Decrease of self-esteem fall due to feeling of guilt and decline of reputation.

30. Act Youth network. Sexual health. Retrieved from: www.actforyouth.net/sexual_health/community/adulthood/life.cfm

3.6 Empathy



Is the ability to experience and relate to the thoughts, emotions or experience of others. It is a quality and a virtue. Empathy is the ability to step into someone else's shoes.

Empathy helps us to:

- connect emotionally with others;
- understand our thoughts and feelings;
- show acceptance, care, and kindness to others;
- express emotions together;
- be available to listen and support others;
- establish trustworthy relationships;
- be merciful.

➤ Why do employers value empathy?

Empathy is an important habit for a successful career. It improves our communication with others and group performance. It also helps us build good working relationships, better understand co-workers, and offer emotional help and support. If empathetic, we can help coworkers improve and make the workplace more enjoyable.³¹

31. Smart Business. The importance of empathy in the workplace, 2012. Retrieved from:www.sbnonline.com/article/the-importance-of-empathy-in-the-workplace/

04

Communication Skills





The most important thing in communication is to listen to what is not spoken.”

Communication skills are the expressions we use when giving and receiving various information. We communicate to discover, to build relationships with others, to help and to persuade. Communication skills help us express and understand others. Most problems in our personal and professional life can be solved if everything is clearly communicated. Effective communication skills are a crucial element in our careers and personal lives.³²

Positive communication helps us to:³³

- talk and converse easily with others;
- establish good relations and treat others equally;
- establish respect in business and social life;
- increase self-esteem and have a good personality;
- express ourselves freely;
- influence individuals or different social groups;
- maintain self-control;
- negotiate better with others.

Tips for good communication

To have a good communication you need to:

- ➡ **be a good listener** – Thus we can better understand what the other person is saying; to then respond properly.
- ➡ **use body language** – a relaxed eye contact, hand gestures and a friendly tone would encourage others to speak openly to us.

32. Peace Corps. Life Skills Manual, 2001.

33. MTD Training Academy. Effective Communication Skills. Retrieved from: www.promeng.eu/downloads/training-materials/ebooks/soft-skills/effective-communication-skills.pdf

- ☛ *Speak clearly and directly*, whether communicating in person, by telephone or by email. If we are not clear, the listener will find it difficult to understand what we specifically want.
- ☛ *Use a friendly tone* encouraging others to engage in open conversation. In all our communications it is important to be polite.
- ☛ *Display confidence* to show that we believe in what we say.
- ☛ *Show empathy*, which means we can understand the emotions of others and share them with each-other.
- ☛ *Show respect* –people will be more open to communicate with us, if we respect their ideas.
- ☛ *Show enthusiasm*, which helps us get positive feedback.

➤ **Why do employers value communication skills?**

Good communication skills are very important for an employer. A successful career requires good communication skills. To do your job effectively, you have to discuss problems, request information, interact with others, and have good human relations skills. For example, during a job interview, employers are impressed by the candidate who answers questions as simply and clearly as possible, thus indicating that he or she is listening and sharing information and ideas.³⁴



34. Institute of Corporate Finance. Communication. Transfer of information to better understand. Retrieved from: www.corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/careers/soft-skills/communication/

“

I have started my own business as a beekeeper. **At school we do not get enough information** to introduce ourselves at a job meeting or give a job interview. Also, we have very little knowledge on entrepreneurship. **Life trainings have helped us a lot** to make the decision to participate in the business idea competition. **These trainings have also helped me improve my communication skills.**”

Ani, 19 years old, Elbasan



05

Higher-order thinking skills





Higher-order thinking skills is a skill that we can use to understand complex information and to find solutions when we encounter unknown problems, uncertainties, questions or dilemmas. It improves our persistent, self-monitoring attitudes, making us open-minded and flexible. Thinking skills help us find explanations, make decisions, and perform well at work.³⁵

➤ **Why do employers value Higher-order thinking skills?**

Today more than ever, thinking skills are essential in the workplace. Jobs that require mostly basic skills for a routine job have diminished, since the 1980s, while jobs that require analytical skills have increased.³⁶ Employers prefer candidates who assess situations using logical thinking and offer the best solution. Employees who reflect logical and analytical thinking, have better professional opportunities and receive higher salaries. All jobs require the employee to have advanced thinking skills.³⁷

Thinking skills are useful in different situations to which young people need to react. For this it is very important:

35. Absent

36. Aedo et al, 2013.

37. American Association of Colleges and Universities. Need more than one area: employer priorities for college learning and student success, 2013. Retrieved from: www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2013_EmployerSurvey.pdf



5.1 Setting goals.

A goal is something you want to achieve or realize, e.g. it can be something to be done or to have, or a place to go. Goals motivate us to succeed in our projects.

The ability to set goals helps us to:

- focus our efforts;
- understand our strengths and weaknesses;
- clarify ideas and set priorities;
- define realities and separate them from our desires;
- take responsibility for ourselves and improve decision-making;
- take control of our lives.

➤ Why do employers value this ability?

Setting goals is very important, especially in the workplace. We decide what we want to achieve by clearly defining our goals. Setting powerful goals shows a strong character and lucidity in thinking.

“

I have been working in selling used phones several years now. **Before I attended the project, I was conflicted with some people, due to problems with untimely payments. After attending life skills training and learning more about communication and negotiation, I have had very few or no cases of conflict with clients. Now I have learned to be patient and ask for my things in the right way.**”

Ernel, 18 years old, Cërrik.



5.2 Decision making.

Decision making is the choice we make between different options. We all make decisions every day, throughout life, and some of them are such that they can affect the rest of our lives.³⁸

Decision-making ability helps us to:

- feel confident, responsible and happy;
- manage stress better;
- choose the right milieu and friends.

➤ Why do employers value decision-making abilities?

Each job involves several levels of individual decision making. Decision-making that brings successful results in our work helps us to make a good impression and look effective. Superiors value employees who are good decision-makers, as this gives them the freedom to focus on training, or other aspects of the job.³⁹



38. Peace Corps. Life Skills Manual, 2001.

39. Kokemuller, n., The Importance of Decision Making & Assertiveness in the Workplace. Retrieved from: [www./work.chron.com/importance-decision-making-assertiveness-workplace-2651.html](http://www.work.chron.com/importance-decision-making-assertiveness-workplace-2651.html)

5.3 Feelings of attraction

Show that we like someone. Attraction is a natural feeling, but the way we act is our choice.⁴⁰

Feelings of attraction help us:

- strengthen close friendships;
- to experience feelings of belonging and partnership;
- to establish mutual understanding;
- strengthen the bond and empathy.

How to make the relationship as fulfilling as possible?

There are several ways to do this, namely:

- *Giving and taking* - A healthy relationship is about both people, not how much one can take (or give) to the other.
- *Listening and supporting* - If two people feel for each other, they provide the necessary support.
- *Respecting* - means to value the other and treat him accordingly, even if he is different from us.
- *Being responsible* - means that others can depend on or rely on us, because we keep our word and are able to tell right from wrong.
- *Showing understanding* - means to put ourselves in the shoes of others, to see life from their point of view.
- *Cooperating* - includes the readiness to work with someone, to be in a relationship and to support him/her.
- *Taking caring* - means the feeling of love or sympathy we have for someone and the desire to protect him/her.

40. PATH Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum, 2006.

➤ Why do employers value this ability?

Employers highly value the positive work environment. They like to see employees build friendships and benefit from the creative ability of the team. If friendships in the workplace are handled with care, they can result in social support, which reduces stress. Such friendships can develop into valuable partnerships.⁴¹



5.4 Problem solving

Is finding solutions to easy or difficult problems and about the way of perception, thinking and understanding.⁴²

Problem solving ability helps us to:

- *take calculated risks* - a risk can mean overcoming a fear, thinking outside the box or simply making a difficult decision, which at the moment may seem vague.



41. Harvard business review. Friends at work make us more productive, 2017. Retrieved from: www.hbr.org/2017/05/work-friends-make-us-more-productive-except-when-they-stress-us-out

42. Indiana state University website. Decision making and problem solving in groups. Retrieved from: www.kell.indstate.edu/public-comm-intro/chapter/8-6-decision-making-and-problem-solving-in-groups/



- *be adjustable and flexible* - clearly understand that problems can change from one moment to the other.
- *be persistent* – to clearly understand that there are solutions and ways out for every problem, fully believing that, we will always find ways to achieve the result if we persevere.
- *be enthusiastic* - to have the energy and motivation needed to overcome the most difficult challenges.
- *be open-minded* - to clearly understand that we may not have all the answers and that others may have other alternative perspectives that can help us.
- *be easygoing* - to have the mostly relaxed and playful approach in solving any problem, thus helping ourselves to find solutions and answers where others see only burden and anxiety.
- *be proactive* - we must continue to move forward and act proactively, no matter how precarious the circumstances may seem at a given moment.
- *be curious* - this makes us have many questions that require answers.
- *be unconventional* - to think outside the box and break the rules to achieve the desired results

➤ Why do employers value problem-solving ability?

Employers like to see good problem-solving skills. It shows them that we have the reasoning, creativity, imagination and determination to get the job done the right way and with the right quality. Problem solving is a key skill that is highly valued in job interviews. People with good problem-solving skills are valued and trusted in every team, as they come up with new ideas and better ways to accomplish something, and help others better understand situations or save time and money.

“

Participating in the project has helped me a lot with information about daily life too. **I have gone through difficult situations in life.** My father, who was ill for some time, passed away. For this I needed a considerable amount of money, which I did not have. I decided to take out a bank loan, but I did not know how to proceed. So, **I consulted with the project** facilitators who gave me a lot of information about how the lending and my obligations worked. I am grateful to them, because **they guided me** and did not let me **go unaware on an unknown path.**”

Ernel, 18 years old, Cërrik.



5.5 Creative thinking

Is the ability to train the mind to “work” creatively. This ability helps us to invent, solve problems, create and communicate in ever innovative ways. Creative thinking is the process of using imagination, which allows us to “think outside the box”.

“

I think, therefore I am.”

Rene Decartes



Creative thinking helps us:

- to add value to our lives and the lives of others;
- to become reliable and confident individuals;
- to accept ourselves, without worrying about the judgments of others;
- to reveal our hidden talents

➤ Why do employers value creative thinking?

Employers prefer those employees who think creatively and bring new perspectives to the workplace. Many job positions require the ability to think creatively. This encourages employers to find solutions in the workplace without much hassle.

5.6 Critical thinking

Is the ability to think on particular issues at a particular moment; the capacity to analyze information and to reasonably judge..⁴³

Critical thinking helps us

- ask clear and accurate questions about problems;
- gather useful information;
- be open-minded;
- communicate effectively with others;
- find new opportunities;
- gain self-confidence, knowledge and insight.

➤ Why do employers value critical thinking?

Employers want those candidates who manage to assess a situation and offer the best solution. Critical thinking skills are among the most useful in almost any job..⁴⁴

A person who has developed the ability to think critically can be entrusted with making decisions independently, without the need for assistance or supervision.

43. University of Louisville. What is critical thinking www.louisville.edu/ideastoaction/about/criticalthinking/what

44. American Management Association. "AMA Survey on Critical Thinking. Employees need higher level skills to succeed in the 21st century (2019)". Retrieved from: www.amanet.org/articles/ama-critical-skills-survey-workers-need-higher-level-skills-to-succeed-in-the-21st-century/



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