This report analyzes the results achieved through the first phase of Blossom Program life skills training. The results show that the training sessions have achieved certain successes and achievements. The training received a lot of response from both the girls and local officials, opening up potentials and opportunities for future development and construction.

The topics shared in the life skills training series receive the girls’ interest and active participation. This is a good sign that the training content has met the needs of the participants. However, in the face of the current changes of society, there are still great challenges for the program such as: diversity of topics, catching up with issues and challenges in society, resources for the project. These are challenges but also open opportunities for development projects.

Although the results and progress of the operation are remarkable, further adjustments, lessons learned and improvements are still needed. Care and improvement are needed so that social activities and services are delivered to the child in the child’s best interest.
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RECOMMENDATION
Firstly, from the partners side, I would like to sincerely thank the Hanoi Women’s Union, especially Bac Tu Liem Women’s Union district for their enthusiastic support in the Summer 2023 Life Skills Training.

Next, I would like to thank the Donors and Board members of HSCV, who have made great efforts to raise funds, support and bring values to Vietnamese children. Everything is very difficult especially after the last pandemic, but no one is giving up and stopping their efforts. As a person who works directly with children, seeing the values you bring opportunities for Vietnamese children, I appreciate that more and more. I am very grateful for the value you bring to my country.

A big thank you to Mrs. Annetta De Vet, who was so diligent and pointed us in the right direction. Thank you to Mrs. Thu Tran for consulting a lot of useful materials and tools for me to complete this training successful.

On the side of the Viet Nam team, I would like to thank you to Mrs. Pham Anh Dao. She helped connect with working network very effectively and taught us from the smallest things. Thank you, Mrs. Nguyen Huong Ly, who has accompanied me on this journey. Thank you to many others that I cannot mention here. I really appreciate everyone's help.

Best regards,
Hoa Nguyen
Social worker
Life skills encompass various perspectives:

As per the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), life skills refer to an individual’s capacity to fully engage in and navigate daily life.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life skills encompass psychosocial and communication proficiencies applied in everyday situations for effective interpersonal interactions and the adept resolution of everyday challenges.

"Any skill that is useful in your life can be considered a life skill."

In essence, life skills transcend mere awareness; they empower individuals to actively apply acquired knowledge to adeptly tackle practical situations, fostering happier and more meaningful lives.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING FOR GIRLS

Vietnam has witnessed socio-economic progress in recent years. Nonetheless, deep-rooted gender biases persist, subjecting girls to various risks from birth. In the 2019 Census, Vietnam displayed an alarming sex ratio at birth of 111.5 boys for every 100 girls, surpassing the natural biological equilibrium. This disparity results from the preference for males over females and prenatal sex selection by parents. Notably, in Hanoi, the sex ratio at birth stood at 117 boys for every 100 girls in 2010.

Furthermore, child sexual abuse cases have seen a disturbing increase in complexity and severity, eliciting widespread concern. Between 2019 and 2021, Hanoi police recorded 315 cases of child abuse involving 359 victims. Of these, 298 cases, constituting 94.6%, underwent criminal prosecution, while eight cases, or 2.54%, faced administrative actions. Notably, sexual abuse accounted for a significant 81.6%, with domestic violence cases, although fewer in number, leading to grave consequences, including fatalities and instances of incest (as per data from Hanoi Police).

Equally disconcerting is the escalation in the severity of violence, which can transpire in any setting, including the virtual realm. Perpetrators can be anyone, with relatives being implicated in several severe cases, yielding incalculable repercussions for individuals, families, and public sentiment.

Life skills training is especially vital for children, particularly girls. These skills empower girls to govern their thoughts, emotions, and actions, with a strong emphasis on their practical application. By adroitly employing essential life skills, girls lay a sturdy foundation for nurturing their creative initiative. Additionally, this training equips them to handle and surmount the psychological pressures arising from academic, occupational, and intricate interpersonal challenges.

While it might initially seem intricate for children, the concept is inherently straightforward. In reality, many girls grapple with identifying their preferences, desires, and future aspirations. Self-introduction can pose a challenge for many as well. Providing girls with a secure, encouraging environment where they can introspect and express themselves fosters confidence and self-esteem. This process not only enhances self-awareness but also enables them to step out of their comfort zones, connect with like-minded peers, explore shared interests and dreams, acquire new skills, and learn how to safeguard and nurture their personal development.
NECESSITY AND PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY

“I came early to join and play with my friends, here I have friends to talk to. I am alone at home with no one” - Mai’s poignant words at the start of the session. Mai’s sentiment is not unique; it resonates with the majority of the girls in our life skills class in Bac Tu Liem.

At home, their parents embark on long workdays, leaving early in the morning and returning only when the day has turned dark. In Vietnam, a school year spans nine months, from September to the end of May, followed by a three-month summer break from June to August. During weekdays, children attend school and engage in school related activities. However, when summer arrives, they find themselves with ample free time, often uncertain about how to fill their days or where to participate in meaningful activities. Many of these parents are manual laborers, struggling to provide for their families and unable to afford life skills training programs, which typically require fees. Moreover, urbanization and the proliferation of the internet have led children to spend more time indoors, limiting their interaction with the outside world.

The girls we encountered in the life skills class faced a common set of challenges: loneliness, shyness, difficulty in communicating with others, introversion, lack of confidence, and feelings of guilt.

Recognizing these hardships and the circumstances faced by these children and their families, the summer 2023 life skills training program was designed not only to impart knowledge and life preparation to these girls but also to provide a safe haven for them to study and have fun. Here, 120 girls aged 11 to 14 can connect, form friendships, share their experiences, and build their self-confidence. We strive to create an environment that nurtures their holistic development and offers support and encouragement for them to flourish.
The core curriculum of “Life Skill Training Summer 2023” encompasses three skill groups:

**SELF-WORTH**
- This segment focuses on self-worth awareness and techniques for managing anger.

**PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**
- It covers topics such as personal hygiene, child sexual abuse prevention, and the skills needed to seek support.

**CARRER SKILLS**
- The program delves into nurturing dreams and setting goals.

**REPORT STRUCTURE**

The report on “Life Skill Training Summer 2023” in Bac Tu Liem district is structured into three parts:

1. **General Introduction:** This section provides an overview of life skills and underscores the significance of life skills training for girls.
2. **Results of the “Life Skill Training Summer 2023”:** In this part, we will present the outcomes and findings of the summer training program.
3. **Proposed Conclusion:** The final section will encapsulate our conclusions and recommendations based on the data and insights gathered.

**METRICS AND MEASUREMENT METHODS**

This report relies on data collected through various means, including reference materials, questionnaires, and in-depth interviews conducted with selected participants.

It’s important to note that certain factors influenced the survey data. For instance, the number of children participating in training sessions varied, with minimal movement among most sessions. However, during the final sessions in two wards, the number of children was halved due to conflicting school schedules. Additionally, sweltering weather conditions necessitated adjustments to the class schedule, resulting in some afternoon sessions being shortened, which, in turn, required the combination of two topics in a single day (namely, seeking support skills and goal-setting skills). Therefore, the figures presented in this report are meant for reference purposes and should not be regarded as absolute values.
As per the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam, all Departments of Education and Training have devised plans and programs for the incorporation of ethics, lifestyle, and life skills education in schools. These initiatives include activities like flag salutations at the start of the week, weekend events, mid-day exercises, and extracurricular programs.

During the introductory session, Chart 1.1 revealed that 32.5% of the interviewed girls had previously engaged in life skills training activities. The majority of these girls had participated in such activities at school, while a minority had experienced other life skills classes. Nevertheless, life skills education in schools faces certain limitations, primarily due to the integration of these skills into the general curriculum rather than treating them as separate subjects. This integration often results in less effective implementation. Teachers encounter difficulties and uncertainties during education because there is a lack of instructional materials for both teachers and students, and the evaluation criteria remain inadequately defined. Remarkably, 67.5% of the girls interviewed indicated that this was their first encounter with life skills training.
The initial session served the pivotal purpose of building trust and rapport between the instructors and the girls. This mutual understanding was essential for establishing a conducive learning environment. Through introductions and self-disclosures, the girls gained insight into the instructors, the organization (HSCV), and their fellow learners. They had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their interests, contributing to heightened self-confidence and openness.

“I was impressed by the interactive activities, such as games and painting to introduce myself. The teachers here are exceptionally friendly and approachable.”

“Life Skill Training Summer 2023” tailored its topics based on a prior survey that gauged the aspirations and interests of the children and their families. During this session, the instructor introduced the learning materials, divided into two components: theory, comprising slides, videos, and stories, and practice, encompassing individual exercises, group activities, collective endeavors, and games. This multifaceted approach aimed to facilitate the application, comprehension, and retention of training content.

“Throughout today, I learned about HSCV and its activities supporting women, girls, and individuals with disabilities. I view the organization’s endeavors as profoundly meaningful, benefiting the community.”

Upon concluding each lesson, a quick survey was administered to enable the girls to assess their participation, gauge the effectiveness of their learning, consolidate their acquired knowledge, and provide input for subsequent lessons. This feedback mechanism enhances their retention of the lessons.
The theme group focused on personal growth topics, encompassing self-worth awareness and anger management. It is evident that these topics were relatively unfamiliar to the girls prior to the training. According to survey data (Chart 2.1), a mere 4% of the girls had prior exposure to training on “self-worth awareness” or similar subjects.

The session on “self-worth awareness” provided the girls with a unique opportunity to delve into self-discovery, identify their intrinsic values, and nurture self-confidence. In addition to gaining insights into their thoughts, comprehending their inner values also facilitated the gradual mastery of emotions and behaviors. Through these lessons, the girls experienced a tangible expansion of their knowledge and a deeper understanding of themselves.

Chart 2.1: Girls participated in the life skill training “self-worth awareness” before

Chart 2.2: The girls’ feelings after participating in the “self-worth awareness” session

Chart 2.2 reflects overwhelmingly positive emotions and sentiments among the girls. The girls’ emotions and expressions underscored the value they derived from the lesson. Each girl was encouraged to select multiple emotions they experienced following the lesson. The most frequently recorded emotions included feeling valued and happy. Many girls expressed heightened happiness and increased self-assurance.

I’m deeply impressed by the notion that every human being is inherently valuable and deserving of love from everyone. Your words and sharing left a profound impact on me.”

“Through today’s sharing session, I gained insights into my own values. What struck me the most was sharing my values with all of you.”
In addition to self-worth awareness, the session on anger management garnered considerable attention from the girls. This topic was relatively uncharted territory for most of them, even though anger is a natural human emotional response. Anger, in certain situations, can have a constructive aspect, but without proper control, it can permeate and influence our behavior and outlook on life. This session afforded the girls an opportunity to reflect on past instances of anger, identify triggers, and learn to adapt their responses to future challenges.

“This marks the first time I’ve taken a step back to contemplate my experiences with anger, gradually finding inner harmony, and embracing relaxation through music.”

Through group discussions and collaborative activities, the girls recognized that there are diverse strategies for managing anger.

Many groups devised ingenious approaches such as engaging in relaxation activities (including physical relaxation, listening to music, and reading), transforming negative emotions into positive energy (through exercise or going for a walk), immersing themselves in studies or household chores, or distancing themselves from the contentious environment. Each group, along with its members, contributed innovative ideas tailored to the girls’ experiences, demonstrating readiness to apply these methods in their lives.

“After this class, I’ve learned effective techniques for anger control and their practical application in my daily life.” “I feel a sense of contentment and realize that managing my anger is not as challenging as I initially thought. Thanks to today’s sharing session, I’ve learned several methods that I will carry with me and consistently apply.”
TOPIC GROUP ON PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

CHART 4: GIRLS PARTICIPATED IN THE LIFE SKILL TRAINING "PERSONAL HYGIENE"

Chart 4.1: Girls participated in the life skill training "personal hygiene" before

Chart 4.2: The girls' feelings after participating in the "personal hygiene" session
The topic group dedicated to preventing child abuse encompasses three main areas: personal hygiene, child sexual abuse prevention, and skills for seeking support. In this section, we will explore the personal hygiene and child sexual abuse prevention segments.

The personal hygiene session particularly delved into knowledge surrounding menstruation and personal hygiene during this period. This is a crucial topic for girls aged 11 to 14, a time when they undergo puberty and experience significant bodily changes. While some girls have already begun menstruating, others have not, making this knowledge both novel and valuable. The session covered seemingly basic aspects, such as the duration of a menstrual period, the length of the menstrual cycle, changes in the body during puberty, and hygiene practices. The children actively participated in this session, displaying enthusiasm and eagerness to learn.

Addressing this topic requires sensitivity, as discussing menstruation can be considered taboo in Vietnamese culture and many other societies worldwide. While societal attitudes are evolving towards more open discussions and knowledge-sharing, often, this subject is taught within families based on the personal experiences of adults. According to our survey (Chart 4.1), 93% of the girls had never received training on personal hygiene, especially during menstruation, before this session. The lesson fostered a positive atmosphere, allowing the girls to engage deeply and receive one-on-one guidance for enhanced learning efficiency. Notably, despite the potentially uncomfortable nature of the topic, the girls found it enjoyable and worthwhile to discuss their menstrual experiences. Many expressed increased confidence, happiness and knowledge.

“The teachers provided detailed and easily understandable explanations. I now know how to handle menstruation when it comes. The teachers answered our questions enthusiastically and conveyed valuable information.”
In contrast to the personal hygiene topic, the girls exhibited a higher level of participation in the child sexual abuse prevention session. However, this percentage was not exceptionally high. Our survey (Chart 5) indicated that 54% of the interviewed girls had previously attended training on preventing sexual abuse, typically held at school. The remaining 46% had not received any instruction on this critical topic.

The variance in knowledge among those who had received previous training is noteworthy. The content and approach employed by HSCV differed significantly from what the girls had learned previously. HSCV’s materials, activities, and exercises featured vibrant visuals and content designed for ease of recall and practical application, according to the girls’ assessments.

"I will not allow anyone to touch my body except my mother. I understand that I have no right to harm others, and no one else has the right to harm me."

The child sexual abuse prevention topic primarily focused on understanding the concept of personal boundaries, the “5-finger rule” regarding different interpersonal distances with strangers, self-protection strategies in various situations, distinguishing safe and unsafe touches, and how to respond in unfortunate circumstances.

The approach to this topic maintained a lighthearted and engaging atmosphere, with content carefully selected to keep the girls excited, happy, and valued. Emotion charts underscored the girls’ feelings of confidence, excitement, and appreciation during these sessions.
In the life skill training session for seeking support, 100% of the interviewed girls had never attended a similar training session. This skill may seem somewhat unfamiliar for the girls, arising from the reality of working families striving to make ends meet. In such circumstances, girls often learn to be self-reliant and take care of others instead of seeking assistance. Many girls shared experiences like, “When I’m hungry, I cook for myself; when I’m sick, I take care of myself; I even prepare meals for my little sister.” These girls have grown accustomed to self-sufficiency and are capable of supporting their parents effectively. However, the skill of seeking support is not at odds with independence and maturity.

This training emphasizes building personal skills for self-care while also recognizing the importance of seeking resources and support when necessary, from appropriate individuals or organizations. These two skills complement each other in a flexible manner rather than conflicting.

During the session, the girls gained insights into the significance of seeking support, the situations warranting support, effective methods for seeking assistance, and available resources in unique cases.

Interactive and hands-on activities were integrated into the lesson, allowing children to practice these skills in various scenarios. Chart 6 reveals that the predominant emotion recorded was the girls’ profound happiness during this content-based learning.
TOPIC GROUP ON CAREER SKILLS

The life skill training session on “Goal Setting” captivated the girls’ attention and inspired enthusiastic participation. Although the training topics may appear unrelated at first glance, they are inherently interconnected. The girls’ initial sharing about their dreams, aspirations, and future desires in the first session laid the foundation for revisiting these aspirations in the concluding session. This final session posed the essential question of how to transform those dreams into reality.

Throughout the lesson, the girls grasped the significance of nurturing dreams, ambitions, and the necessity of setting life goals. An invaluable tool introduced in the training was the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) goal-setting principle. SMART goals encompass five dimensions that enable girls to focus on their objectives and periodically reassess them.

Girls engaged in practical goal-setting exercises and addressed questions aimed at guiding them in turning their aspirations into tangible goals using the SMART framework.

“You guided me to take the next step on my journey toward realizing my dream. The class not only boosted my self-confidence and diminished my low self-esteem but also motivated me to strive. I will remind myself never to give up.”

This adaptable and effective SMART framework and associated activities are not merely valuable in the present moment; they can also be applied by girls to countless other goals they may set in the future. Feedback from the girls after the sharing session affirmed that they found the knowledge imparted to be impactful.

CHART 7: GIRLS PARTICIPATED IN THE LIFE SKILL TRAINING "GOALS SETTING"

Chart 7.1: Girls participated in the life skill training “goal setting” before

Chart 7.2: The girls’ feelings after participating in the “goal setting” session
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the “Life Skill Training Summer 2023” program in Bac Tu Liem district has made significant strides in equipping girls aged 11 to 14 with essential life skills. Despite initial challenges and unfamiliarity with certain topics, the girls have demonstrated eagerness, resilience, and the capacity to embrace new knowledge and concepts.

The program’s success can be attributed to its comprehensive curriculum, interactive teaching methods, and a supportive environment that fosters trust and openness among participants. Each session, whether addressing personal development, child abuse prevention, or career skills, has contributed to the holistic growth and empowerment of these girls.

As the program progresses, it is crucial to continue monitoring the long-term impact of the skills acquired and explore opportunities to reinforce and expand upon the knowledge imparted. Additionally, ongoing efforts should be directed towards reaching a broader audience of girls, ensuring that these valuable life skills are accessible to all who may benefit from them.

“What struck me the most during today’s training session was the realization that I can do my best. I recollected my dreams through this class, and I am committed to not letting the lessons go to waste. I will apply all the knowledge you’ve shared with me. I eagerly anticipate participating in more lessons featuring engaging activities and valuable insights.”

Ultimately, the “Life Skill Training Summer 2023” program serves as a testament to the importance of investing in the personal development and well-being of young girls, enabling them to build a foundation for a brighter and more promising future.
The life skills sharing program in Bac Tu Liem district has initially yielded highly positive results, attributable to meticulous preparation and effective coordination between the implementing organization and local staff.

On the Instructor’s Side:

1. Understanding Child Development: Instructors demonstrated a deep understanding of the psycho-physiological characteristics of children at various age levels. This understanding enabled them to employ tailored teaching methods and engage effectively with the children.

2. Comprehensive Materials: The program benefited from well-prepared educational materials, including learning resources, tools, illustrative examples, and instructions tailored to the children’s ages, preferences, and societal development trends. Carefully designed and printed exercises were provided to the children before each session.

3. Empowering Child Exploration: Instructors created a conducive environment for the children to develop their skills independently. They served as guides and facilitators, encouraging children to explore and unleash their full potential. Instructional approaches ranged from simple to complex, ensuring gradual progress. Individual and group exercises allowed for personalized guidance, optimizing the learning experience for each child.


From the Women’s Union of Bac Tu Liem District:

1. Active and Supportive Participation: The officers of the Women’s Union within the wards demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm and proactiveness. They created favorable conditions, providing support for facilities, electricity, and water access. The provision of projectors enhanced the learning environment, ensuring that the children had optimal study spaces and easy access to knowledge.

2. Targeted Outreach: The Women’s Union officials displayed a deep understanding of the children’s characteristics in the area. This understanding enabled the program to effectively reach its intended audience—girls in need of support. Additionally, they maintained regular communication with the children, ensuring timely announcements regarding changes in the school schedule.
AREAS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

1. Enhancing Educational Materials: Drawing from past life skills sharing experiences, there is room for improving the comprehensibility and detail of certain content. Audiovisual materials and exercises can be enhanced to align more closely with the program’s objectives, featuring increased consistency, vibrancy, and professionalism.

2. Interactive Ice-Breakers: Incorporating ice-breaking games and movement activities directly related to each lesson’s topic can yield favorable outcomes, fostering engagement and participation.

3. Survey Questionnaire Evolution: Consider evolving the survey questionnaire to incorporate different types of questions, segregating surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the program from those conducted after each lesson. This will provide a more nuanced understanding of the program’s impact.

4. Diversifying Experiences: Expanding the range of experiential training activities can go beyond knowledge enhancement, encompassing a variety of other skills such as physical activity, yoga, art, cooking, and more. Instructors have the opportunity to diversify and adapt these experiences to enrich the participants’ learning journeys.
RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of activities as well as experiences in the “Life skill training summer 2023” in Bac Tu Liem district, I have a few suggestions as follows:

Regarding cooperation opportunities: coordinate the implementation of life skills training activities with the Women’s Union of Hanoi and other provinces, expand propaganda training in schools, coordinate with support centers help with child rearing, social welfare centers or other educational institutions. This is a positive direction that can be considered to increase the coverage and beneficiaries of the program.

Regarding participants: developing training programs for children and parents and teachers. Children and especially girls are the indirect beneficiaries of training for parents or teachers. Strengthening skills and knowledge for parents about: parenting skills, how to talk to their children, the change of their children through each age can help parents understand more and have more appropriate behaviors with their child.
Regarding the topic of training: continue to implement topics that have received good results, in addition to study more new topics such as: career guidance, network safety, e-cigarettes and drugs, environmental protection school. Today, children have many choices in terms of study programs, schools, and careers. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for young people. Many young people still do not know what profession or school they should go to despite having many options.

Vocational orientation training sessions/courses will help young people understand themselves in terms of: interests, strengths and weaknesses, academic ability, family and socio-economic factors, etc. orientation, choosing a major, choosing a school, choosing a career for the future. Not only professional skills, but also network safety skills are essential when phishing and cyberattacks are increasingly sophisticated and do not exclude anyone. Anyone can become a victim of online scammers, especially when in Vietnam, children use internet access devices from a very early age. In addition, drugs and synthetic drugs have crept into schools through snacks, drinks, and e-cigarettes, causing many concerns for parents when their children go to school. Criminals target children when designing eye-catching, confusing packages or creating delicious flavors and aromas for toxic stimulants outside the school gates.

Training will be necessary when it is possible to equip children with knowledge and skills to prevent and be alert to new forms of crime and temptation. In addition to knowledge training, additional training on other skills such as cooking and mixing skills; group of creative art skills: painting, collage, craft; groups of motor skills such as yoga, movement games, groups. Training on children’s rights, helping children understand their rights and healthy development is also a good training topic.

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