Combining Life Skills and Literacy: The Potential of the MOOC CORE for disadvantaged groups in Egypt

Project duration in months: 18 (preferable: 30)
Starting date: January 1, 2022

Project leader: Samir Boulos
Lead Institution: Zurich University of Teacher Education (PH Zürich)
Swiss and MENA Partners:

1) Zurich University of Teacher Education (PH Zürich), Department International Project in Education (IPE)

2) University of Asyut, Faculty of Education

3) University of Zurich, Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies
Objectives:

1) Capacity building in the development of MOOCs in teacher training is provided

2) Teacher trainers and students of Asyut’s Faculty of Education are trained to use CORE as part of their life skills and job orientation teaching

3) Life skills and job orientation skills are fostered through trainings with CORE in the framework of literacy campaigns in the region of Asyut

4) Transversal objective: Special focus is put on gender aspects and women’s/girls’ empowerment as part of life skills teaching
CORE: A step-by-step program to develop life skills and self-competencies among young people

The CORE edX course is freely available at: https://mooc.phzh.ch/ (offline version also downloadable)

Placemat created by Syrian NGO trainers in a CORE Training in November 2020
**Aims of CORE**

- Support schools and educational NGOs working on transversal skills
- Promotion and fostering of life skills & transversal skills among teenagers and young adults
- CORE has been developed for vulnerable groups
  ➔ The topics are relevant for all young people
- Contribution to personal orientation, integration into the society and to developing self-esteem
- CORE is used in Greece (since 2019) and Lebanon (since 2020)
- The 9 topics deal with (among others): dealing with emotions, health, job orientation, discussing values and norms

*A boy working with CORE in an early test training in Athens, November 2017*
Main activities / Work Packages:
1) Exchange visit: presentation of the literacy program (Egyptian team) and introduction into the CORE-program and MOOC-development (Swiss team)

2) Develop a draft manual on how illiterate learners can use CORE and how literacy campaigns can be combined with life skills education as well as girls/women’s empowerment

3) Elaboration of questionnaires for students and trainers (Asyut University) on the use of the materials

4) Identifying best partners that already conduct literacy campaigns and can test the CORE material

5) CORE-pilot: Using the CORE material in the literacy training settings for 4 months (training and coaching through PHZH and University of Asyut lecturers)

6) Evaluation (based on questionnaires results) of the outcomes of the CORE-pilot and of the potentials of MOOCs for the teaching at the Faculty of Education of Asyut University
Expected Outcomes:

1) Capacity building is realized at the Asyut University with a focus on the potentials of a MOOC combined with life skills education and gender aspects.

2) The literacy campaigns use life skills training (based on CORE) in pilot phase.

3) A manual for trainers is drafted on how to use CORE in the framework of literacy campaigns.

4) Insights are gained on the potentials of MOOCs for Asyut University and of the CORE-program for the literacy campaigns.
Risk Management:

1) Discovering strengths and capacities can lead to the questioning of societal norms, esp. gender norms, thus increasing tensions within families.

2) Student cooperation is not forthcoming to engage in combining literacy campaigns with life skills training.

3) Cooperation with the NGOs realizing the literacy campaigns is not forthcoming.

4) Developments of the COVID-pandemic hamper the implementation of the project.