



L.I.F.E TRAINING

(LEADERSHIP, INDEPENDENCE, FUTURES, EMPOWERMENT)

(2015-2016)

Rural School, Kurunegala, Sri Lanka.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Report is focused on LIFE training analysis of comments and feedback from students and teachers of a rural school in Kurunegala. Five 12-hour programmes were facilitated **during 2015-2016 and 125 Students from grades 6 to 10 participated in the programme, 57% were female and 43% were male.**

This **research report was conducted over a 2-month period** (from 3rd October to 7th December 2016) by Himali Nanayakkara a fourth year Psychology student on an Internship with Racheal Ireton, Director of *The TEA* (training, empowerment and awareness) *Project* and English Consultant at a rural school in Kurunegala. **The TEA Project developed the LIFE training programme and facilitated the first programme in May 2015.** This training is now run with Government Schools, grass roots Charities and Orphanages Island wide in Sinhala, Tamil and English mediums. There is a growing number of Sri Lankan LIFE trainers and the findings from this report are extremely important.

LIFE training at the rural school is now facilitated by one English teacher called Ms Nadeeshani who is a TEA Project volunteer.

The aim of this research project was to understand the impacts of LIFE training upon children and identify areas for programme development.

METHODOLOGY

We collected data using three key methods – these were:

- 1. Students survey**
- 2. Students focus groups**
- 3. Interviews with teachers**

1. 68% of students who attended the LIFE training programmes participated in this research project. 84 of 125 students completed a detailed questionnaire. The following number of students completed our survey:

Grade 6 to 8 x 64 students

Grade 9 to 10 x 20 students

2. Focus Groups enabled us to collect detailed qualitative information from students in small intimate group discussions. Three x 45-minute Focus Groups were conducted with 30 students from grades 6, 7 and 8. Due to time restrictions and commitments of higher grade students we were unable to run a focus group with grade 9 and 10 students.

Grade 6 = 17 students

Grade 7 = 7 students

Grade 8 = 6 students

3. Four x 15-minute teacher interviews were conducted with teachers/grade coordinators from grades 6, 7, 8 and 9. Interviews with teachers focused on teachers' own observations of changes in attitudes and behaviors of participating students.

ETHICS

This research project was conducted according to strict ethical principles set out in our initial research proposal. No personal details were collected and no names of participants are used in this report. Information from participants is simply demonstrated by gender, age and grade.

CHAPTER 2 – Student Survey

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on the quantitative analysis of survey questions using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Participant information

84 participants completed the survey; this is 68% from a total number of 125 students who participated in training programmes over a 2-year period. **Gender** is shown in table no 1.

TABLE NO 1

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	54	64%
Male	30	36%
Total	84	100%

TABLE NO 2- This table shows the frequency and percentages of participants' **age**

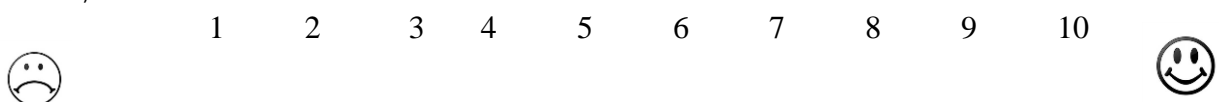
Age	Frequency	Percent
11	6	7%
12	25	30%
13	31	37%
14	7	8%
15	4	5%
16	11	13%
Total	84	100%

TABLE NO 3- This table shows the frequency and percentages of participants' **grade**

Grade	Frequency	Percent
10	12	14%
6	29	34%
7	27	32%
8	8	9%
9	8	9%
Total	84	100%

QUESTION NO 4

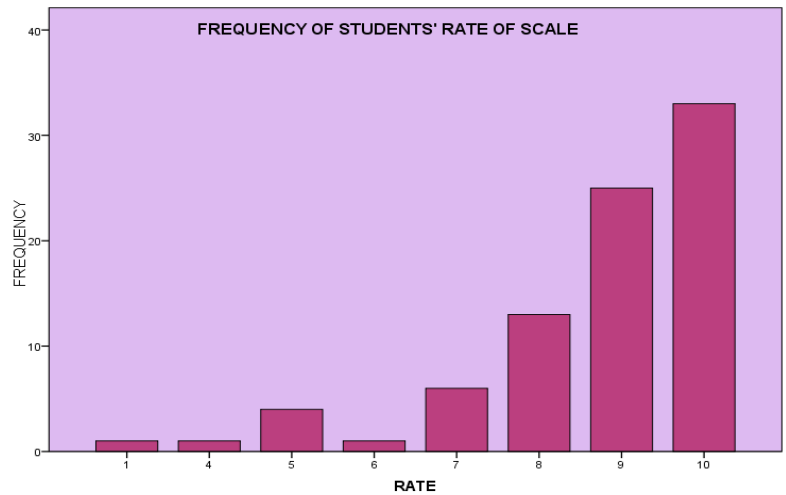
Question number 4 asked 'on a scale of 1-10 tell us how you rate the LIFE Training (1 being not very good and 10 being awesome?)



Participant's answers to Q4 are demonstrated in table number 4 and the bar graph below.

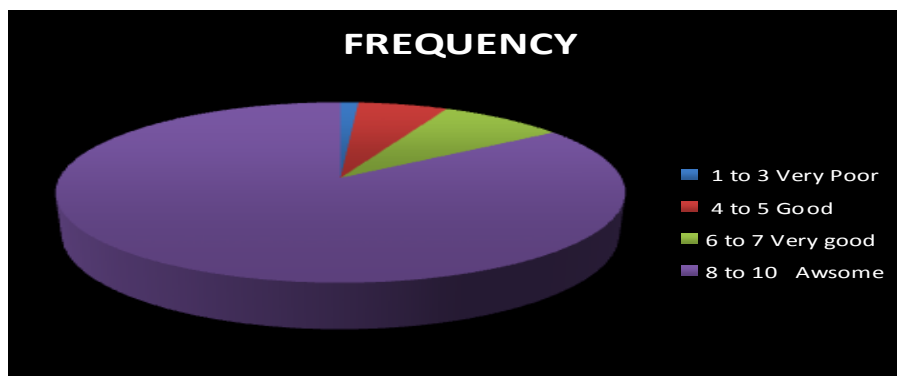
TABLE NO 4 AND BAR GRAPH

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
1	1	1.5%
4	1	1.5%
5	4	5.5%
6	1	1.5%
7	6	7%
8	13	15%
9	25	29%
10	33	39%
Total	84	100%



Below is a further analysis of how participants rated the training.

Rate	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 3	Not very good/poor	1	1%
4 to 5	Good	5	6%
6 to 7	Very good	7	8%
8 to 10	Awesome	71	85%



According to the pie chart above **93% of participants said the LIFE training was 'awesome and very good'**. Only 1% said the training was 'very poor'.

Below are Tables 5A and 5B – these tables demonstrate how students rated the training based on Gender Differences (5A male) and (5B female)

Table 5A – male

Rate/males	Frequency	Percent
5	3	10%
7	4	13%
8	6	20%
9	5	17%
10	12	40%
Total	30	100%

Table 5B - female

Rate/females	Frequency	Percent
1	1	2%
4	1	2%
5	1	2%
6	1	2%
7	2	4%
8	7	12%
9	20	37%
10	21	39%
Total	54	100%

According to the above two tables female students rate the training higher than male students. **90% of male students rated the training as ‘very good and awesome’ compared to 95% of girls**, however no boys gave the training a rate lower than 5.

QUESTION NO 5

Question number 5 asked ‘**what did you learn during the LIFE Training**’. There were ten sub-questions under this section the following table shows how participants answered each question.

TABLE NO 6

What skills did you learn?	YES		NO	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
To be confident	83	99%	1	1%
Public speaking & presentation skills	83	99%	1	1%
Leadership qualities	80	95%	4	5%
Co-operating with others	79	94%	5	6%
Listening skills	80	95%	4	5%
Dealing with difficult situations	80	95%	4	5%
Feeling relaxed and happy	80	95%	4	5%
Having a goal in life	72	86%	12	14%
Children have rights	82	98%	2	2%
Do you still use the skills gained from the LIFE training?	79	94%	5	6%

Table 6 tells us that **99% of participants said the 3 most common skills they learnt were; confidence, public speaking/presentation skills and children’s rights knowledge**. The lowest rating skill children learnt was **goal setting** with 14% saying they did not learn this skill. The above demonstrates the important value of LIFE training for children who develop a range of fundamental soft skills. It is – important to note that **95% of children said the training helped them to feel ‘happy & relaxed’ and ‘deal with difficult situations’**.

The three focus group discussions held with grade 6, 7 and 8 students mirrored the above information relating to skill development, with confidence and presentation skills being among the most important skills children identified. **Almost all children said they ‘learnt about Children’s Rights for the first time’ on the training**.

Table number 7a shows **gender differences** in relation to skills gained.

TABLE NO 7A – Female participants

Female- 54 participants				
Skills learnt by girls	YES		NO	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
Confidence	53	98%	1	2%
Public speaking & presentation skills	54	100%	0	0
Leadership qualities	54	100%	0	0
Co-operating with others	51	94%	3	6%
Listening skills	51	94%	3	6%
Dealing with difficult situations	52	96%	2	4%
Feeling relaxed and happy	52	96%	2	4%
Having a goal in life	50	93%	4	7%
Children have rights	53	98%	1	2%
Do you still use the skills gained from the training?	51	94%	3	6%

TABLE NO 7B

Male- 30 participants				
Skills learnt by boys	YES		NO	
	frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
Confidence	30	100%	0	0
Public speaking & presentation skills	29	97%	1	3%
Leadership qualities	27	90%	3	10%
Co-operating with others	28	93%	2	7%
Listening skills	29	97%	1	3%
Dealing with difficult situations	28	93%	2	7%
Feeling relaxed and happy	28	93%	2	7%
Having a goal in life	22	73%	8	27%
Children have rights	29	97%	1	3%
Do you still use the skills gained from the training?	28	93%	2	7%

The above information tells us that **100% of girls** (54 girls) learnt **'leadership and presentation/public speaking skills'** and **100% of boys** said they developed **'confidence'**. Both boys and girls said the least learnt skill was **'having goal in life'**. 97% of boys compared to 94% of girls said they developed **'listening skills'**. A very high proportion of **boys and girls** said that they still use skills gained from the training programme this tells us that **skill development through LIFE training is sustainable, unlike knowledge based programmes where information is often forgotten or not implemented.**

QUESTION NO 7

This question focused on the difference LIFE training has made to students school life. We asked **'did the LIFE training have a positive effect on your school life?'** This question was a key focus for our Focus Group discussions.

TABLE NO 8 – How children answered Q7 ‘did the LIFE training have a positive effect on your school life?’

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	75	89%
No	3	4%
Not sure	6	7%
Total	84	100%

89% of all students said the training ‘did have a positive effect on their school life’ and only 3 children said the training ‘had not positively impacted on their school life’. This finding is extremely important and surprising because the LIFE training was not designed to improve educational outcomes for children. We felt some grade 6 children may not have fully understood the meaning of ‘school life’ and ‘social life’ and ‘home life’ so these questions became a topic for our focus group discussions. During focus group discussions grade 8 students felt the training improved their ‘school life’ more than grade 6 and 7 children; which is extremely significant. A further study looking at assessment grades would help us learn if children were able to increase personal grades after the training.

When we consider looking at gender differences more girls than boys felt the training ‘had a positive impact on their school life’. The gender differences are shown in TABLE NO 9

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	91%	26	86%
No	1	2%	2	7%
Not sure	4	7%	2	7%
Total	54	100%	30	100%

QUESTION NO 8

Question number 8 asked ‘did the LIFE Training have a positive effect on your home life?’ TABLE NO 10

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	50%
No	7	8%
Not sure	35	42%
Total	84	100%

According to this question 50% of children said ‘yes’ and 8% said ‘no’ and (42%) were ‘not sure’ if the LIFE training had a ‘positive effect on their home life’. When we compare question 7 and 8 we can conclude that the LIFE training had more of a positive effect to student’s ‘education’ over their ‘home life’. During the focus groups we discussed this question further. When we consider the gender difference 54% of female students and 43% of male students answered that the training positively affected their home life. The gender differences are shown in TABLE 11.

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	54%	13	43%
No	5	9%	2	7%
Not sure	20	37%	15	50%
Total	54	100%	30	100%

QUESTION NO 10

Question 10 asked 'was the LIFE training 'as good' as you expected it to be'. 51% of children said as 'it was better than they expected' and 1% said 'it was worse' than they expected.

TABLE 12

Answer	Frequency	Percent
BETTER	43	51%
WORSE	1	1%
AS I EXPECT	40	48%
Total	84	100%

When we looked at gender difference to this question it was mostly equal with 50% of boys saying it was better than they expected compared to 52% of girls.

QUESTION NO 11

This question asked more detail about improvements in the 'social life of children' and whether the training helped or not with students 'personal and social life'. There were three separate questions in this section:

1. With making friends
2. Being more liked by others in your class
3. Getting less involved in conflicts (arguments and fighting)

96% of children said 'yes' to the question: 'did you feel that the LIFE Training helped you with your social life? When we looked at this question in gender terms both 96% of boys and girls said the training helped them with their social life. This is a very positive response, especially that boys felt the training helped them with their 'social life' because the training was designed to make children more resilient and confident to deal with life, in the holistic sense.

Part 1

Did the training help you with making new friends?

TABLE 13

Answer	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No	2	4%	3	10%
Yes	52	96%	27	90%
Total	54	100%	30	100%

When we consider about the gender differences for participants more girls (96%) felt the training helped them to make new friends over boys (90%). Data for boys and girls is very positive and as educators we cannot underestimate the importance of friendship at school – the ability to make and maintain strong friendships has an enormous impact on student's wellbeing and creates a positive environment conducive for learning.

Part 2

Being more liked by others in your class

TABLE 14

According to participant's responses **81% said that the training helped them to be them more liked by others in their class.** More boys (27%) than girls (15%) said the training did not help to be more liked by others.

Answer	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No	8	15%	8	27%
Yes	46	85%	22	73%
Total	54	100%	30	100.0

Part 3

Getting less involved in conflicts (arguments and fighting)

TABLE 15

Answer	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No	6	11%	5	17%
Yes	48	89%	25	83%
Total	54	100%	30	100%

When looking at the gender difference in table 14 more girls (89%) than boys (83%) answered 'yes' to this question. However these results highlight the development of student's basic communication and listening skills resulting in **86% of all students who said 'the training did help them to get less involved in conflicts (arguments and fighting)'**.

CHAPTER 3 – Student Survey

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses on the qualitative analysis of the survey. A number of questions were open ended therefore not restricting feedback and comments from students. This chapter will provide students responses to the questions below:

1. QUESTION NO: SIX - What is the best skill you learn from the LIFE training?
2. QUESTION NO: NINE - Did the LIFE Training change you in any way?

QUESTION NO 6

Question 6 asked 'what is the best skill you learn from the LIFE Training?'

Grade 6 boys - 29 grade 6 students participated in this research project.

Below are **6 top rated skills** listed from **grade 6 boys**.

1. *Speak in public*
2. *Co-operative with each other*
3. *Leadership qualities*
4. *Respecting others*
5. *Confident among all people*
6. *Public presentation skills*

Grade 6 girls - Female students from grade 6 made the same comments as grade 6 boys above. However **grade 6 girls** made 6 additional comments:

1. *Good leadership skills with team spirit*
2. *Presentation skills*
3. *Stage confidence*
4. *Moral values*
5. *Responsibility to share thoughts amongst others*
6. *Management skills. Be punctual*

Grade 7 boys and girls – 27 grade 7 students participated in the survey. When we looked at grade 7 responses to question 6 the responses were the same as grade 6 students, male and female. **The most common responses from grade 7 students, male and female were:**

1. *Team work skills*
2. *Speaking in public*
3. *Leadership skills*

Grade 8 – 8 grade 8 students participated in the survey. Grade 8 students, male and female responded to question 6 with the same comments as grade 6 and 7 students. **All grade 8 comments were the same as grade 6 and 7.**

Grade 9 boys - When we consider grade 9 participants there were 4 male and 4 female students. **Grade 9 boy's comments were:**

1. *Learnt to achieve and have a goal*
2. *Learn leadership skills*

Grade 9 girls - Female students gave the same responses as with lower grades however **grade 9 girls also mentioned:**

1. *Learnt to cooperate*
2. *Developed self-confidence*
3. *Public presentation skills*

Grade 10 boys - When considering grade 10 students they **gave very different responses** to other grades. There were 2 male and 9 female students who answered this question in grade 10. **Skills that grade 10 students said they learnt on the training programme were:**

1. *Developed leadership skills*

2. *Presentation skills*
3. *Cooperative skills*
4. *Ability to express ideas*

Grade 10 girls – Grade 10 girls said all of the above comments with some additional skills:

1. *Setting smart goals*
2. *Achieving goals*
3. *Try harder to be happy and confident*
4. *Making friends*

From a total of 85 participants who answered question 6 ‘What is the best skill you learn from the LIFE training?’

More than **80% of all students** said the ‘*best skill they learnt was*’: Below are the **5 TOP SKILLS** students gained from participating in the LIFE training.

1. Presentation skills
2. Confidence
3. Ability to speak in public
4. Cooperation and team working
5. Leadership skills

QUESTION NO 9

Question 9 asked students to identify any new behaviors they had developed ‘**did the LIFE Training change you in any way?**’

Grade 6 and 7 - students listed skills and behaviors as listed in question 6.

Grade 8 - students commented their **exam marks were higher** than previous exams marks. They developed more social skills they identified their hidden talents and became more proactive.

Grade 9 - students commented a change in behaviors such as, better cooperation with others, improved confidence and communication skills, children rights, more organized, **they developed the ability to socialize better and identified hidden skills.**

Grade 10 – student comments were similar to grade 9 with some changes such as: learned to debate, better communication with peers, respect to others, participate in group activities, **learned how to solve problems and make correct decisions.**

CHAPTER 4 – Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions enabled us to gain further qualitative information from students and understand student’s personal experiences and share examples of any changed behaviors. All focus

group discussions focused on four key areas:

1. Knowledge of Children's Rights
2. How and if the training helped students to be more ambitious
3. How and if the training helped with students 'social life'
4. How the training impacted on students education

47% of students from grade 6 – 8 participated in focus group discussions. Discussions from three student focus groups have been amalgamated under the four key areas.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

100% of students said that they learnt about Children's Rights for the first time on the LIFE training. From 64 grade 6 to 8 students a random sample of 30 students participated in a discussion about Children's Rights. All 30 students said they had **no previous knowledge** of this subject before the training therefore we can assume that all students from the sample had no knowledge of **Children's Rights**. This is both disappointing and pleasing that students learnt about their rights. One student commented; *"all children do not know about children's rights especially poor children"*.

A key learning outcome of the LIFE training is Children's Rights – in brief students learn the history of children's rights, the different types of rights they have and they learn about the most widely accepted set of Children's Rights principles in the world **the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)'**. All States Parties have a responsibility to promote Children's Rights and educate children about their rights and responsibilities under this Convention.

The results from focus groups suggest **a failing in the Sri Lankan education system** and a need for schools to educate students about rights and responsibilities as enshrined in the UNCRC. During the training programmes students told us they were aware of basic rights to education and health care but students **systematically failed to identify rights they had to participate** and have their views heard by adults. *"When I got home I talked with my brother and sister about children's rights my mother said that I had learnt something new"*.

Students felt that all adults do not know about Children's Rights. They commented *'that adults from poor communities with a lack of education would not know such as farmers'*.

All students said that their parents knew about Children's Rights which seems to contradict the previous statement. One student explained why; *"the way they treat us they let us take part in everything"*

DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S AMBITIONS

Focus Group Question: *'After the training did you feel stronger about your future, did you feel that you could achieve more?'*

Grade 6 - 100% of respondents said *'they felt they could achieve more after participating in the training'*.

Grade 7 - 100% of children said *'the training improved their ambition'* students said *'they felt they could do more with their life after the training'*.

Grade 8 - 100% of children said **'yes'** and they commented that *'it did help to build up their ambition'*.

Furthermore children commented that their *communication skills, team spirit and presentation skills improved*.

Building ambition is a very intangible objective that cannot be measured easily or through a survey. Students found it useful to first have a discussion about ‘ambition’ and its meaning. From the results of the focus group discussions we can clearly see that the training **helps students to feel more ambitious and ready to take on new life challenges**, this will be closely linked to the development of new found skills and a boost of self-esteem.

HELPING WITH HOME LIFE

Grade 6: 41% of students in the focus group commented that *‘their home life was different after they participated in the training’*. Children learn to be more punctual and polite. Some children felt *‘they were more able to openly discuss ideas with their family after the training’*.

Comments to students from parents included, *“they noticed I was kinder to my sister and parents than on other days”* and *“my mother noticed that I worked better with my brother”*.

“In local assembly [not school] I had to speak and my mother told me that I was more confident with giving new ideas”.

Grade 7: 5 participants said their *‘home life was better’* after the training and 2 said *‘no’*. We asked children for some examples and changes in behaviour that parents had noticed;

One participant said *“I was shy before but after the training I developed confidence to talk with family members and my father noticed that”*.

“I spend my whole time with books and after participating in the training I participated more to family life and they noticed it”.

“I fight with my brothers a lot and after I participated in the training I worked with them better; I had a better team spirit”

Grade 8: When we asked *‘if the training had a positive effect/change to your home life’* all participants said *‘there were no changes in their home life’*. Furthermore they commented *‘they have same attitude after the LIFE training’*.

All students felt differently about this question based on their grade. Approximately half of grade 6 and 7 students felt the training *‘did improve their home life’* and all grade 8 students who participated in the focus group felt the training *‘did not have any impact on home life’*.

HELPING WITH EDUCATION

Grade 6: 80% of participants said *‘they had improved their listening ability’* than in days before the training. Two participants said that *‘they take more marks as a result of being more punctual’*.

Grade 7: All participants said that *‘the LIFE Training was helpful to their school work’*. Children said they *‘improved their listening ability’*. One student said that *‘before the training she did not listen to her teacher and after the training she improved her listening ability and it has helped her memorise everything’*.

One quiet and thoughtful boy who trainers recall ‘the training’ having a noticeable impact on said that the training affected his life in three ways;

1. *“Easier to co-operate with friends”*
2. *“More confidence”*
3. *“Teachers gave me more tasks and the class teacher commented I talked more after the training”*.

One boy said *“I improved my creative and presentation abilities”*. Another said *“I improved my time management. I made the time table after the training which was helpful”*.

Grade 8: All participants said that *‘the training was helpful to their education’*. Students said ‘the training *‘made them better organised, punctual and confident to talk with teachers and do effective reading’*. After the training children said they were *‘better at being smart in problem solving’*.

One student said *‘when she faced a Prefect interview the training helped her to face the interview with more confidence’*.

CHAPTER 5 – Interviews with teachers

This chapter is focused on feedback and comments from teachers. We specifically wanted to learn from teachers and Grade Coordinators what changes in behavior, if any, they had observed in students who had participated in the LIFE training.

Four teachers were selected based on having high numbers of participating students in their class/grade.

- Ms.Christeen - Grade 6 Coordinator
- Ms.Bameesha - Grade 7 Coordinator
- Ms.Mizna - Grade 8 Class Teacher
- Ms.Harshi - Grade 9 Class Teacher

The interview was structured and we asked teachers three key questions:

1. What is your idea about the LIFE training?
2. What change and/or improvements have you seen in students (skills that have improved)?
3. Do you have any suggestions to improve the programme?

Interview -1

- Interviewer - Himali
- Interviewee - Christeen
- Grade - 6
- Date - 28th of November 2016

Q1. What are your ideas about the L.I.F.E Training?

The teacher said according to her idea the training was important to students because *it improves their educational skills, personality and public speaking skills*. She said that *weaker students who are below average in the class are selected and after students have participated in the training they improve many new skills*.

Q2. What change/improvements have you seen in students, if any?

The teacher mentioned that *most of the children cower in the class because they are shy to talk*. When

they have participated in the LIFE training she has seen improvements; *they learn how to move with their peers and talk with other children better.* Students are also more forward after the training than before.

Q3. Suggestions to improve the programme

The teacher said according to her knowledge the training is completed by a limited number of students. If the Coordinators could give more opportunities for more students to attend it would be helpful to improve their abilities and skills. The teacher suggested two programmes for 2017 – involve weak students in the first batch in the beginning of year to help build up their abilities and skills.

Interview- 2

Interviewer - Himali
Interviewee - Ms. Bameesha
Grade - 7
Date - 28th of November 2016

Q1. What are your ideas about the L.I.F.E Training?

The teacher said the training is a very good opportunity for students. She noticed that students improve in four areas:

1. Skills
2. Knowledge
3. Hidden talents
4. Confidence

Q2. What change/improvements have you seen in students, if any?

The teacher said that after participating in the LIFE training she recognized that some **students were friendlier and better organized.** The teacher talked about two students in her class who were introverted before they participated in the training, one is male student and the other is a female student.

The teacher said *'X-child was a 'backward child' before participating in LIFE but after 'X' participated in the training 'X' engaged nicely with class activities and was more pleasant to peers and teachers. 'X' improved leadership qualities and participated actively in class activities. 'X' was made a monitor of the class.'*

'Y-child was not very friendly with her class mates before participating in LIFE training after the training she was more friendly with others and more cooperative with other students in class'.

Q3. Suggestions to improve the programme

The teacher suggested increasing the frequency of the training and she appreciated the training for selecting slower students in the class giving them an opportunity to participate.

The teacher said keep doing the training. Finally she wanted to give thanks to the Coordinators of LIFE training. ***"It is a good training programme. The training was helpful to encourage students to speak in English, improve their talents, skills, qualities and improve their standard of life."***

Interview -3

Interviewer - Himali
Interviewee - Mizna
Grade - 8
Date - 30th of November 2016

Q1. What are your ideas about the L.I.F.E Training?

The training is really good. Students improve so many new skills through the training.

Q2. What change/improvements have you seen in students, if any?

The teacher mentioned that most of the children improved their leadership skills and they improved their presentation skills. As an example she said some “empty talk students developed their leadership skills and after the training they were not shy to talk in front of the class”.

Q3. Suggestions to improve the programme

The teacher said that if the Coordinator could select lower average students and average students to participate it would be beneficial.

Limitations

The teacher is new to the school and had limited knowledge about the training.

Interview -4

Interviewer - Himali
Interviewee - Harsha
Grade - 9
Date - 30th of November 2016

Q1. What are your ideas about the L.I.F.E Training?

It is good programme that develops children’s skills like presentation, leadership and creative skills.

Q2. What change/improvements have you seen in students, if any?

Most of the children improve their leadership and presentation skills. As an example there are many students who participated in the training who recently presented attractive information in an exhibition of ‘global warming’.

Q3. Suggestions to improve the programme

The teacher said if Coordinators give a chance to students in the Prefects Board it would be a good opportunity for them to develop their leadership skills and presentation skills. The teacher suggested that Coordinators take volunteer students from grade six to ten to participate in the training together. The teacher suggested running the training with more grade 9 and above students to help them improve their skills.

CHAPTER 6 – Summary

SUMMARY

The LIFE training programme at a rural school in Kurunegala had a significant and positive effect on students. The training has developed confidence and important soft skills, such as presentation and listening skills. Schools and academic life in Sri Lanka often overlook the importance of skill development in children for a more traditional knowledge based approach. Addressing skill development of students reduces stress and increases wellbeing and confidence. Teaching that

addresses skill development is often more interesting and stimulating, thus students absorb more information and they are able to put new knowledge and skills into immediate and practical use.

The training had a more positive impact on *school life* for grade 8 students. During focus group discussions all grade 8 students said the training had a positive impact on their school life and 89% of all students who completed the survey agreed. All teachers who were interviewed acknowledge the many benefits of the training and teachers commented they had observed positive changes in behavior and attitudes. During the focus group discussion all students said the training *improved their ambition* by helping them to feel they could achieve more.

Importantly students told us that they enjoyed the training experience with 93% saying it was awesome and very good. 95% of all students said the training helped them to feel *happy & relaxed* and *deal with difficult situations*.

Nearly all students (96%) said the training helped them with their *social life*, including 96% of girls and 90% of boys who said the training *helped them to make new friends*. 86% of students said the training helped them to get *less involved in conflicts*.

According to the survey 50% of students felt the training had a positive effect on their *home life*. During the focus group discussion grade 6 and 7 students gave a number of examples of how life at home had improved after the training. Interestingly grade 8 students felt there were no positive changes to their home life.

One aspect to be addressed in the future is developing knowledge on Children's Rights as no students said they were made aware of their rights as children before the training programme.
