

Background on the WorkLinks Skills and Values Assessment (WLSVA) Tool

The development of the World Learning's WorkLinks Skills and Values Assessment (WLSVA) Tool was led by World Learning and supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) program. The recommendations made regarding the use of the WLSVA tool are provided by World Learning and do not represent the views of, and should not be attributed to, the U.S. Department of State or MEPI.

The WLSVA tool has been validated as a credible and reliable tool to measure individual- and group-level change over time among youth and young adults in soft skills, earning skills, and certain civic values. The validation process was conducted in Algeria in French based on items originally in English; the tool has also subsequently been translated into Arabic. The soft skills index of the WLSVA tool includes 23 questions (*covering the constructs of conscientiousness and self-efficacy, goal-setting and perseverance, interpersonal skills, managing emotions, and thinking and planning skills*) that have an internal reliability alpha of 0.91, test-retest alpha of 0.89, and a smallest real difference (SRD) of 3.8% meaning that scores must increase more than 3.8% from time one to time two in order to demonstrate real change rather than measurement error. The earnings index of the tool includes 17 questions that measure job search skills and entrepreneurship skills with an internal reliability of 0.85, test-retest 0.90, and SRD of 4.9%. Finally, the civic values index (*covering World Learning's institutional values of community & civic engagement, intercultural understanding & empathy, social inclusion & justice, and sustainability*) has an internal reliability of 0.79, test-retest 0.86, and SRD of 5.5%. Additionally, the WLSVA Tool has been tested for convergent validity with social emotional resilience, using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-4), showing a significant and expected negative relationship in which higher skills and values scores are correlated with lower perceived stress ($F=11.75$, $df=2$, $p<0.000$), Eta Squared= 0.12). The WLSVA Tool has also been validated to be used with all indices in combination, for a total of 56 questions, with change reliably detected when there is greater than 3.3% increase in scores from time one to time two, making the tool suitable for language adaptation to new contexts and usage with programming that seeks to detect changes in skills and values among youth and young adults.

Purpose of the WLSVA Tool

In partnership with the Algerian Center for Social Entrepreneurship (ACSE), MEPI is designed to promote economic diversification and opportunities for Algerian youth in high-potential knowledge- and technology-based fields. Objective 2 of the MEPI project is *"Prepare young Algerian men and women to meet the demands of knowledge- and technology-based promising growing sectors."* One of the outcome indicators for this objective is, *"Number of individuals with improved soft skills following participation in a USG-assisted workforce development program."* Objective 3 of the MEPI project is, *"Incubate emerging and innovative social entrepreneurs, and connect them with the supply chain and potential investors."* One of the outcome indicators for this objective is, *"Number of youth who improve their core entrepreneurial aptitudes, including*

growth mindset, design thinking, and creative problem –solving.” These outcome indicators are meant to be measured by the use of a pre- and post-assessment tool, called the WorkLinks Skills and Values Assessment Tool (*WLSVA Tool*), which will measure key soft skills and World Learning’s values among youth who have participated in the project.

WLSVA Development

The WLSVA Tool was developed. In the summer of 2019, World Learning conducted a systematic review of the literature as well as primary field research (*Honeyman, 2019*) and identified 11 soft skills that are critical for youth to find and retain work, as well as 2 skillsets for earning a livelihood through a job search or entrepreneurship. In addition, 4 of World Learning’s organizational values were included; thus, the WLSVA Tool was originally comprised of 11 critical soft skills, 2 earnings skills, and 4 values that are discussed below. In summary, World Learning completed the early stages of assessment tool development, which was item and scale development, drawing on existing validated items from the following assessments:

- Adaptive Performance Scale (Charbonnier-Voirin, 2012)
- California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), Resilience & Youth Development Module (Constantine et al., 1999)
- CARE Youth Leadership Index (CARE 2014)
- IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) (Wolfram et al., 2016)
- PYD Toolkit; The Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale (CPYDS) (Shek et al., 2007)
- PYD Toolkit; The Flourishing Children Project (FCP) (Anderson et al., 2005)
- PYD Toolkit; The International Youth Development Survey (IYDS) (McMoris et al., 2007)
- The Proactive Personality Scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993)

The analysis resulted in 151 possible items including information on the soft skill or value construct referred to in the source documentation, the item stem, the response options, and the applicable age range. World Learning conducted an additional literature review on job search skills items³ and entrepreneurship skills items⁴, including examining World Learning’s own past program evaluation tools. World Learning staff ranked these items based on their similarity to World Learning’s research-identified skills constructs and definitions, selected the top 4 for each skill or value, and then proposed minor revisions to the item or stem to allow for a single response scale across all items. World Learning also conducted a literature review on certain assessment methodology issues, concluding that it would decrease reliability and data usability by diverse project teams to use reverse items, anchoring vignettes, or situational judgment items; therefore, these types of items were not included. All together, the final list to be tested contained 78 items.

Tool Adaptation to Local Context:

To adapt the original 78-item English version of the WLSVA Tool developed by World Learning to a local French language version that could reliably measure “*improved entrepreneurial aptitudes*” among Algerian youth who participated in the Algerian Entrepreneurship and Employment Project, World Learning followed these seven steps:

1. MEPI Algerian Staff & Program Alumni Conduct Initial Translation –
2. Cognitive Interviewing with the Target Language Group- French Speaking Algerian Youth 19 to 29 years of age
3. MEPI Staff’s Final French Version of WLSVA Tool for Pilot-Test
4. Pilot-testing for Initial Alpha Reliability of Overall Tool and Constructs
5. Revision of WLSVA Tool based on Pilot-Test Results
6. Final Reliability Testing & Assessing Test/Retest Reliability

For complete information on the validation of this tool, see the report WorkLinks Skills & Values Assessment Tool: Psychometric Validation in Algeria (Dershem, 2020) or World Learning’s [website](#).

WLSVA Training

Training is divided into two sections in these materials but may be done in one session if desired

Training Objectives

1. What is the WLSVA and how do I use it?
2. What do I do once I have WSLVA data?
3. Learn to match baseline and endline data, and practice this skill
4. Understand key program data

Training Agenda

1. Introduction: Why use the WLSVA? (15 minutes)
2. Complete the core WLSVA yourselves (30 minutes)
3. Editing the WLSVA on Kobo Toolbox (20 minutes)
4. Downloading data (20 minutes)
5. Reflections and Q&A (10 minutes)
6. Recap: Learning from Part 1 (10 minutes)
7. Practice matching baseline and endline data (30 minutes)
8. Use the “WLSVA Participant and Results Tracker” Excel Workbook to calculate % change and identify key results (40 minutes)
9. Reflections and Q&A (10 minutes)

Sections 5 and 6 may be skipped if the training is done in one session.