

PERCEPTIONS OF LOW SKILL WORKERS CONCERNING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION
FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN LEBANON

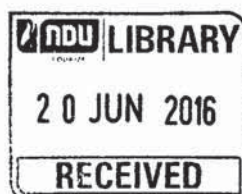
A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education/English

by

Charbel Marcellino Tadros

Department of Psychology, Education and Physical Education
Notre Dame University – Louaize
Lebanon

Fall, 2014



PERCEPTIONS OF LOW SKILL WORKERS CONCERNING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION
FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN LEBANON

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education/English

by

Charbel Marcellino Tadros

Department of Psychology, Education and Physical Education
Notre Dame University – Louaize
Lebanon

Fall, 2014

Thesis Committee:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Signature of Approval</i>	<i>Date</i>
<u>Dr. Toni Kopaly</u> Thesis Advisor, Academic Title		<u>24/11/2014</u>
<u>Wessam Al Chibani</u> 1 st Reader, Academic Title		<u>24/11/2014</u>
<u>Fr. Joseph Tannous</u> 2 nd Reader, Academic Title		<u>3/12/2014</u>

The Thesis Release Form

I, Charbel M. Tadros, authorize Notre Dame University – Louaize to supply copies of my thesis to libraries or individuals on request.

I, _____, do not authorize Notre Dame University – Louaize to supply copies of my thesis to libraries or individuals on request.



Signature

24-11-2014

Date

Abstract

Life skills are the skills that are used in daily life in order for an individual to survive and interact appropriately and productively with the society and the environment. The purpose of this qualitative study is to find out what life skills are needed by low-skill workers in Lebanon in order to compile a list of life skills which can be used as a basis for a life skills curriculum adapted to the Lebanese culture and community for individuals with special needs. In order to achieve its objectives, the study employed a semi-structured interview with low-skill workers in Lebanon. The interview questions target the five main dimensions of life skills education, which are Self Care and Hygiene, Social Communication and Relationships, Housing and Commutation, Career and Money Management and Looking Forward, and Making Plans. After the interviews have been done and the life skills were extracted from them, the research provided a list of over 250 life skills which are adaptable to the Lebanese community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If I am to thank every person who played a direct or indirect role in bringing together all the elements which were needed in order to complete this thesis, I would probably need another book. Therefore, my fellow friends, colleagues, and NDU family members, please excuse me if I have not thanked you in this work. Know that I am deeply grateful for all the support you have given me, especially by tolerating my endless talk about my thesis.

However, I can never neglect to thank Dr. Toni Kopaly, my thesis advisor who understood my excitement and was able to support me every step of the way. I know I can be an incessant handful sometimes, yet he was able to understand the importance of my work and provided invaluable guidance.

Additionally, my deepest gratitude goes to my committee members, Dr. Wessam Chibani and Fr. Joseph Tannous who were also able to understand the importance of the work. Their small, yet priceless pointers and comments during the proposal defense and the thesis review saved me plenty of trouble down the road and provided a sound framework for my research.

Moreover, this work would've never seen the light had it not been for the continuous support and tolerance of my wife Christine. She was able to provide the quiet time that I needed in order to complete my work, even though she had to juggle between house chores and taking care of our newborn baby Sky.

Finally, a huge thank you goes to the entity who arranged the universe as I needed it to be and brought all the people and events that I needed into my life. However, had it not been for your willingness to answer destiny's call, this work would've never been done. Whoever you

may be, whether you played a role in inspiring this research, in facilitating it, in participating in it, or in reading it now, I cannot thank you enough.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
Background.....	11
Context	12
Purpose of the Study.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	13
Research Questions	14
Definition of Terms.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
Historical Overview of Special Education in the World	16
Education and Special Education in Lebanon.....	18
Life Skills Education	19
Description of life skills.	19
Social workers and communities for adults with special needs.	20
Conflicts in life skills categorization.....	23
The five dimensions of life skills education with an emphasis on their applicability in the Lebanese context.	27
Possible low-skill occupations for individuals with special need.	42
The need for a life skills program in Lebanon.	45
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	46
Introduction.....	46
Research Design.....	47
Qualitative vs. quantitative research.....	47
Why choose a qualitative approach for this type of research?.....	47
Research Model.....	48
Participants	49
Instruments	52
Data Processing and Analysis.....	54

Ethical Considerations..... 55

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS 57

Introduction..... 57

Research Question 1 57

Self care and hygiene. 57

Social communication and relationships. 60

Housing and Commutation 64

Career and Money Management 68

Looking forward and making plans..... 71

Research Question 2..... 74

Research Question 3:..... 77

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 79

REFERENCES 83

Appendix A..... 96

Appendix B..... 98

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Job distribution of research participants.....	50
Table 2: Age ranges of research participants.....	50
Table 3: Family situations of research participants.....	51
Table 4: Gender distribution of research participants	51
Table 5: Years of service of research participants.....	51
Table 6: Expected target dimensions in interview questions	52
Table 7: Dimensions and Subcategories of Life Skills.....	54

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The meaning of any individual's life and its purpose is defined by the community as a whole. For the community to assign a positive definition to someone's life, that person needs to have played or still be playing an important role, which affects the lives of the members of the community. Teachers teach, doctors heal, engineers build, mechanics repair, plumbers fix, etc... Even singers, comedians, and actors, those deemed to add no physical value to the community, are considered important because they bring about joy and entertainment to everyone. However, when a person plays no significant role and brings no useful contributions to society, that person is usually deemed worthless or even worse: a burden to the community.

A burden to the community is a person who, whether through lack of power, knowledge, or will cannot contribute to the wellbeing and improvement of the community. A paralyzed person does not have the power to contribute. A lazy person does not have the will to contribute. An individual with intellectual special needs does not have the knowledge to contribute. However, the only person who should truly be considered a burden to society is the lazy person who has the power and the knowledge to contribute, but will not do it out of pure laziness. In some cases, those who do not have the power or the knowledge to contribute find other ways to do so. A paralyzed person may be a great storyteller or theoretical physicist (like Stephen Hawking) and a person with intellectual special needs may be able to carry heavy loads or possess immense artistic talents (like Stephen Wiltshire). In these two cases, lack of power and lack of knowledge, it is the duty of the community to find ways for these individuals to contribute. This will not only reduce their burden on society, but will also make them feel more useful, more wanted, and more human.

Background

When a person is physically fit and has some ability to communicate with others in his environment, but lacks the intellectual skills which enable him to be more or less independent and knowledgeable in what the community needs, the latter can find or create ways for that person to contribute to the wellbeing and advancement of the society. However, when such individuals are disregarded and left marginalized, they may become a burden to society or worse. In order to survive, such individuals may join gangs who commit crimes and thefts or may resort to begging on the streets.

In more advanced countries such as in Europe, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and others, there are special programs and facilities for these individuals. These programs and facilities teach individuals with special needs how to survive and bring about positive contributions to society. Unfortunately, in Lebanon, a large majority of these individuals are not catered for appropriately if at all. This renders them true burdens to society where they exhaust resources, yet give nothing in return. In many cases of middle to low class families, these individuals attend a few years of schooling, and then spend the remainder of their time in special needs schools with little or no contact with the world. In other cases, especially with high class families, some of these individuals may somehow finish school, and then spend the rest of their lives at home, with their families, doing nothing.

This problem is due to the fact that, in schools, these individuals may be taught various facts, but nothing on how to relate and deal with the real world. They may know the history of Lebanon and can name all the presidents, but they have no idea how to use money. In such cases, an education in life skills is very important and may be the difference between a burden on society and a productive member of the community.

Context

Life skills education is the teaching and learning of the skills which enable a person to cope with and survive in the community. It includes everything from taking care of oneself, taking care of others, managing a home, coping with a job, using money, planning, etc... In most cases, we call upon some of these skills unconsciously and don't realize that we are actually using life skills. However, in the case of certain individuals with special needs; especially those with moderate to severe cognitive delays and autism spectrum disorders, the skills that regular people pick up through the community need to be specifically taught and practiced.

Life skills curricula have been available in the advanced countries of the world for a very long time, and they have considerably improved the lives of individuals with special needs significantly. In the United States and other similar countries, individuals with special needs have become an integral part of society where they have jobs and take care of themselves with little or no supervision. This is not only due to the well-organized life, but also to the training and life skills education that these individuals have undergone throughout their lives.

On the other hand, in Lebanon, even though some individuals with special needs go through the process of formal education, a large majority remains inefficient and not appropriately employed. When these individuals are taught how to make the best out of their lives and are armed with the life skills, which enable them to be productive members of society, they will cease to be viewed as burdens, but as a positive impact in the community.

When referring to individuals with special needs, the realm is extensive and extremely complex. Therefore, whenever a study in special education is undertaken, it only addresses a certain part of that realm with certain characteristics. For this study, the individuals with special

needs who are targeted are those who are physically fit, but have average to severe cognitive delays or autism spectrum disorders.

In Lebanon, while individuals with more severe special needs are more catered for in sheltered workshops and schools for special needs individuals, the portion of individuals with special needs described in the previous paragraph are not cared for as much as the others. Their parents, as well as the individuals themselves, feel that sheltered workshops and other special needs facilities in Lebanon are not for these individuals. Therefore, an education, which would allow these individuals to become a part of society, is what is needed. Such an education can only be an education in life skills.

Purpose of the Study

Since individuals with special needs have a lot of untapped potential and can be integrated in the community as has been continuously demonstrated through successful American and European life skills programs and studies. The purpose of this study would be to find out what life skills are needed by individuals in order to survive in Lebanon. This will be done by interviewing people from different low-skills jobs (waiters, supermarket employees, housemaids, etc...) and asking them about the life skills they regularly use in various areas of their lives (commutation, work skills, family life, housing, etc...). By using this information, existing authorities in the field of special education can create a life skills curriculum, which is adapted to the Lebanese community.

Significance of the Study

This study will prove extremely useful for schools and NGOs, which deal with students with special needs in Lebanon. With a readily available list of life skills, these institutions will be saved the hassle of trying to adapt American or European life skills curricula to the Lebanese

culture. Moreover, this list will enable the creation of many life skills programs for students with special needs in Lebanon, which, in turn, will be able to help more individuals with special needs to become more productive. Unfortunately, this study will heavily rely upon foreign research and programs due to the fact that very little research in this field has been done in Lebanon.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

- 1- Knowing that there are many social and cultural differences between Lebanon and more advanced countries such as the USA, what are the life skills needed for an individual to survive in Lebanon?
- 2- How can we adapt a life skills curriculum taken from a more advanced country in the field of special education to the Lebanese individuals with special needs?
- 3- At what point in their lives should Lebanese individuals with special needs be placed under a life skills curriculum?

Definition of Terms

Individuals with Special Needs– In this study, the individuals with special needs referred to will be those who have no crippling physical disabilities and whose IQ is below average and/or have deficits in adaptive behavior (Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE), 2011) and cannot function in an inclusive classroom environment. Moreover, these individuals are verbal, are not prone to random violent outbursts and can communicate more or less clearly with other individuals in the community. The diagnoses which may be included under this definition may be Autism Spectrum Disorders (unless they are non-verbal and/or display violent outbursts), cognitive delays, mild Down Syndrome and other similar cases.

Life Skills – In this study, the term “Life Skills” refers to the collection of skills needed by an individual, be it with or without special needs, in order to adapt and function appropriately in his local community or environment (Rosenberg, Robinson, & Fryer, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Overview of Special Education in the World

Individuals with various impairments and special needs have been part of human civilization for thousands of years; if not since the beginning of human existence. The perception of these individuals and the level of their integration by the communities they belonged to have changed over time and between different civilizations (Rotatori, Obiakor, & Jeffrey, 2011). While some ancient European and Mediterranean peoples considered these individuals as cursed by the gods and shunned them (Metzler, 2006), other peoples considered them to be a more positive presence in their communities such as the Hopi Indians who considered individuals with Down Syndrome to be “Children of the Sun” or incarnated angels (Wendt, 2011). On the other hand, some Arabian physicians called Epilepsy “the Diviner’s Disease” and considered that the visions and mumblings which manifest during an epileptic seizure to be prophecies and warnings from the future (Trimble, 2007). Many lords and kings had individuals with special needs reside in their courts for various reasons such as prophets or court fools and provided them with shelter and food as long as they remained in service.

The umbrella of cases considered as special needs is very wide and spread across various categories. Some authorities in the fields of education and special education have gone as far as considering that every individual in the world has some form of special need (CASE, 2011). However, these special needs may be very trivial or easily overcome with corrective measures such as wearing eyeglasses or hearing aids. Moreover, special needs may be physical, such as blindness and paralysis, intellectual, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia and social/behavioral, such as autism spectrum disorders. Each of these categories can be subdivided into multiple sections and sometimes, a case may belong to more than one category (Tomlinson, 2012). For example,

many autism diagnoses are accompanied with dyslexia or ADHD which makes them social as well as intellectual (Tantam, 2012).

In the past, before medical breakthroughs discovered neurological reasons for some intellectual and social disabilities, many individuals with autism spectrum disorders, epilepsy, ADD, ADHD and other special needs were considered either crazy, eccentric or just plain stupid or clumsy (Kelly & Ramundo, 2006). To this day, many children with mild cases of certain special needs remain undiagnosed and lag behind in their school work and studies because of teacher inattention or parental refusal of a formal diagnosis (Graungaard & Skov, 2006). However, even when medical proof started appearing in journals regarding the reasons behind certain forms of special needs, the general public remained largely unaware and uncaring. Many of these individuals with special needs remained segregated and without appropriate care almost till the end of the twentieth century (Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Gibb, Rausch, & Cuadrado, 2011).

Then, in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, as internet technology became more accessible worldwide and information started being shared more freely around the globe, people gained a wider ability of researching their children's disorders. Moreover, pre-existent special needs advocacy groups were able to gain more momentum and more following. Eventually, in 1997 in the United States, the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) was passed and was soon after followed by the NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act in 2001 (Ralabate & Foley, 2003). Together, these acts mandated free access to public education to every child in the United States and especially those with special needs (Osgood, 2005).

At around the same time, the United Kingdom also passed similar legislations regarding special needs education namely the SENDA (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act) in

2001. SENDA was later replaced with the Disability Discrimination Act in 2005 requiring all educational organizations to provide adequate support to all individuals with special needs to insure similar opportunities for everyone (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009).

Education and Special Education in Lebanon

According to BouJaoude and Ghaith, Lebanon's contributions to the education of youths are notable and go back very far into the past. Unfortunately, Lebanon's turbulent history and political situation all through the ages played a detrimental role in the development of the educational sector in general. The most notable updates to the educational system happened during the French Sovereignty over Lebanon according to the Sykes – Picot Agreement between 1920 and the Lebanese independence in 1943. During that time, the French inaugurated a new system of public education and then instated French as being an official language in Lebanon alongside Arabic. Moreover, the official examination system was started and, even though it has undergone many changes over the years, it still exists to this day whereby all Lebanese students in the Academic education section are expected to sit for nationwide exams in all academic subjects in grades nine and twelve. The second noteworthy update to the Lebanese educational system happened after the Taif Agreement in 1989. The idea of special education was then introduced and a plan was proposed to provide education and integration for individuals with special needs (BouJaoude & Ghaith, 2006).

Even though the ministry of education in Lebanon passed laws regarding mandatory education of primary school children including those with special needs since 1998 (UNESCO, 1999), this law remained largely ineffective until Public Law 220 was approved by the Lebanese parliament in 2000 (Abdul Kader Rakha, 2011). Many schools did, in fact, start to accept students with special needs by then with many private schools having already been accepting and

catering for students with special needs way before then. Notably, Eastwood College was the first school in Lebanon to start an inclusive special education program in 1986 (Eastwood College, 2013). However, many schools remain to this day unable to accept students with special needs due to lack of resources or inadequate facilities or unwilling to cater for students with special needs because of public perception and school reputation (Fleming-Farrell, 2013).

Life Skills Education

Description of life skills.

In our daily lives, we unconsciously employ a large variety of skills, which allow us to safely make sense and interact with the world around us. These skills may be a means of understanding and communicating with others, an understanding of various social codes and norms that we abide by, a comprehension of various road signs and lights, which enable us to commute safely, or many others in a multitude of skills that we use without actually knowing how we learned them or what they actually are. These are called “Life Skills”, “Independent Living Skills” or “Daily Living Skills” and they help individuals function effectively and productively within their environments in order to lead a healthy and meaningful life (Nova Scotia Education, 2011).

The field of life skills is very wide and is not only applicable to individuals with special needs. In different countries, different life skills programs are applicable in different contexts including rehabilitation programs (Robinson & Porporino, 2004), prisons (Schram & Morash, 2002), refugee camps (Sinclair, 2007), women empowerment (Young, Phillips, Yu, & Haythornthwaite, 2006) and many other situations and programs. Some of the most notable works in the fields of life skills education can be attributed to Hansen (2003), who worked on organizing a life skills program, Community Living Stratford and Area (CLSA) in 2011, which

provides practice guides for life skills programs, and Cronin and Patton (2001), who studied life skills education for special needs in general; in addition to other research done by Dover (2005) on facilitating inclusion of special needs individuals through incorporating life skills programs, and Dereka (2004) on teaching life skills to adults with special needs. Unfortunately, these works are more pertinent with international standards, which cannot be wholly applied to a Lebanese context due to the large differences between the Lebanese and other societies.

In Lebanon, there has been little research done, which links back to life skills education. Most works are related to special needs education or inclusion such as works done by Wehbi (2006, 2007, & 2008) regarding social work and inclusive education, Salem (2013) concerning inclusion attitudes, Khochen and Radford (2012) also concerning inclusion, and Hatoum (2010) regarding educating students with Down Syndrome. Unfortunately, with these works bearing minor references to life skills education, most of the information in this literature review will be drawn from international sources detailing the different areas of life skills education for special needs students.

Social workers and communities for adults with special needs.

What facilitates the development and conduction of life skills programs in the US, UK or some European countries is the availability of communities and social work services tailored for individuals with special needs. Going into the details of these facilities and services will prove useful if we are to develop life skills programs for Lebanon.

In many advanced countries around the world, adults with special needs are expected to be treated equally, just like regular adults (Hughes, 2001). In order to provide this equality, adults with special needs are also expected to provide for themselves and become gradually independent from their parents (Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000). However, not all individuals

with special needs can achieve total independence while their parents cannot be expected to care for them their whole lives. Moreover, not all parents are equipped to deal with children with special needs and especially during the transition to adulthood phase, which means that they will need professional support (Frankel, 2004). This support comes in the form of social workers and communities for individuals with special needs. One of the oldest of such communities in the United States is The Arc of King County (Dahlem, 2012), which was founded in 1936 in the Greater Puget Sound area and serves thousands of individuals with special needs annually (Arc of King County, 2012).

Most of these Special Needs community organizations such as the Lambs Farm organization have similar descriptions and provide some of the following services and facilities:

- Residential services including “group homes” where groups of individuals with special needs live alongside staff members and learn life skills, “individual apartments” for individuals who cannot live with others, “intermediate care facilities,” providing services needed by the residents, and “community residences,” which are outside the community, but in the neighboring towns and villages, which also provide a chance for more advanced adults with special needs to integrate within the community under staff guidance.
- Vocational services include “community employment programs” providing jobs within the community while helping them go through the regular job interviews and hiring processes, “on campus industries,” which are more structured environments to help individuals become more productive by working on packaging or other tasks, “senior programs” for elderly individuals with special needs, and “home based support facilitation,” which allows individuals to enjoy a semi-independent experience between their family home and community life.

- Recreational programs allow the inhabitants to enjoy social life and entertainment activities with one another and sometimes with the neighboring communities.
- Job opportunities where the organization seeks employment outside the community for the individuals within it in order to help them become more independent and productive (Lamb Farm, 2013).

As for social workers, they have a myriad of tasks which include:

- Continuous reassessment of each individual's hygiene and self-care skills
- Caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of the individual
- Encouraging the fostering of long-term friendships among the individuals with special needs
- Helping individuals with special needs to apply for jobs within or outside the community
- Assisting and training individuals with special needs in the workplace
- Providing advice to the workplace to render jobs more accessible for individuals with special needs
- Advocating on behalf of the individual with special needs when the individual himself cannot do so
- Making sure that the individual with special needs does not get involved in illegal or perverse behaviors (Asquith, Clark, & Waterhouse, 2005).

This is only a short list of the most important roles played by social workers in the world of individuals with special needs. In coordination with the caretakers in special needs communities, the social worker helps in finding the best placement for individuals with special needs.

Conflicts in life skills categorization.

Based on the regional overview of “Life Skills-Based Education in South Asia” prepared for the South Asia Life Skills-Based Education Forum in 2005, a life skills-based education should target four main dimensions, which are the “individual dimension” encompassing all the skills needed by an individual in order to remain clean, presentable, and healthy, the “social dimension” covering skills related to dealing with other people in the community, the “cognitive/reflective domain” dealing with issues of self-knowledge and personal psychology, and the “instrumental dimensions” working on skills related to planning for the future and managing a career (UNICEF, 2005, p. Annex A). Other reports and research papers suggest and work on different categories or simply address these categories of life skills education by other names. For example, the “individual dimension” can be found under the name of “self-care and hygiene skills” while the “social dimension” may be referred to as “social communications and relationships” (CLSA, 2011). As for the “instrumental dimension”, it may be divided into three main areas: “career and money management”, “housing and commutations” (Cronin & Patton, 2001), and “looking forward and making plans” (Hansen, 2003), which are sometimes considered as categories in their own right. This is due to the fact that the instrumental dimension may be extremely broad and vague; especially that it is composed of skills, which are sometimes unrelated.

The cognitive/reflective conflict.

While most researchers agree and find common grounds regarding the areas of “self care and hygiene”, “social communications and relationships” and the areas included under the “instrumental dimension”, considerable debate ensues concerning what should be included in the “cognitive/reflective dimension” in the field of life skills for individuals with special needs;

especially that these individuals, in most cases, have fundamental difficulties in the cognitive domain (Poulou & Norwich, 2002). While some individuals with special needs suffer from short attention spans, others may suffer from memory issues and other forms of forgetfulness (Westwood, 2007). Regardless, most researchers agree that this area should not be ignored and should be worked on despite the continued disagreement regarding the means of addressing this dimension.

Proponents of academic instruction and the behaviorist movement believe that these individuals should still be part of a schooling system whereby they will learn facts and figures by rote which would prove useful for them in daily life later on (Wehby, Lane, & Falk, 2003). This is due to the fact that these students usually find it difficult to locate useful information because of reading difficulties and comprehension skills. This makes the rote learning of certain pieces of information a necessity for survival (Trejo, 2008). These researchers are supported by many advocates of the school inclusion system who also believe that students with special needs should not be treated differently and should be included within a regular school environment albeit with more support and assistance (Dover, 2005). Moreover, there is increasing support for this approach by supporters of the Applied Behavior Analysis or ABA approach, heavily stressing on teaching skills as behaviors through stimulus – response like activities with a fading reinforcement of desired outcomes. This is especially prevalent because the ABA approach is evidence based and progress is easily observable (Ysseldyke & Burns, 2008).

On the other hand, opponents of Applied Behavior Analysis, especially those supporting authentic learning environments, believe that formal academic instruction should not be considered for individuals with special needs beyond a certain age or cognitive level. Instead, a global learning for life approach should be adopted in which students learn to actively seek out

information in an attempt to build their own cognitive database (Baker & Brightman, 2004). This can be done through the teaching of basic research skills through which the students will not only build their own information banks by researching various topics, they will also be able to acquire any information they may require when they need to (Campbell, 2003; Reisberg, 1998). These researchers are heavily supported by proponents of Project-Based Learning which, in short, is a teaching methodology that starts by offering a problem for the students and having them research ways of resolving it under the supervision, guidance and scaffolding of the teacher (Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010).

Incorporation of the cognitive/reflective domain in the dimensions of life skills education.

According to many learning theories researchers, and especially the supporters of the constructivist approach, a learning method, which helps students learn how to actively construct their own knowledge, is much better than a learning approach where students are only on the receiving end of the learning equation (Huang, 2002). Despite the ongoing debate, the main point remains that students with special needs need to have their cognitive/reflective dimension addressed (Bart, 2001). With the different abilities and disabilities of individuals with special needs, each of the two approaches to learning deserves equal merit. While some students with special needs, especially those on the autism spectrum, will benefit more from structured learning environments relying heavily on memory and behavior training, other students with severe ADD or memory issues would benefit more from a constructivist environment (Steele, 2005). Therefore, both teaching approaches, behavioral training, and constructivism need to be used equally, hand in hand, and in moderation to allow all special needs students to learn and

build information (Kuiper, Volman, & Terwel, 2005; Kirby, Silvestri, Allingham, Parrila, & La Fave, 2008).

Moreover, regardless of the ongoing debates, this cognitive/reflective dimension can be addressed within the other areas and dimensions of life skills education. Thus, we can eliminate it as a life skills dimension in itself and incorporate it within the other dimensions. Therefore, we can adopt the following 5 dimensions of life skills education with the cognitive/reflective dimension being a part of each of them:

- 1- Self Care and Hygiene (CLSA, 2011) also known as the Individual Dimension (UNICEF, 2005)
- 2- Social Communications and Relationships (CLSA, 2011)
- 3- Housing and Commutation (Cronin & Patton, 2001)
- 4- Career and Money Management (Cronin & Patton, 2001)
- 5- Looking Forward and Making Plans (Hansen, 2003)

Within each of these dimensions, the cognitive/reflective domain can be incorporated in two main ways embodying the behaviorist and the constructivist approaches. Up to a certain age and for certain objectives, students would be asked to memorize certain key facts, which need to be recalled quickly and research other topics in order to construct their own understanding of them. For example, in “Self – Care and Hygiene”, students need to memorize the average body temperature if they feel sick and they could research the best ways to deal with their sickness. In “Social Communications and Relationships”, they need to memorize emergency numbers while they can research the best ways for approaching the other gender. In “Housing and Commutation”, they will need to memorize their address as well as the payment dates of different bills while they can research the best neighborhood to live in. As for “Career and

Money Management”, they will need to memorize the pin code of their ATM card, but can research the best bank to put their money in. Finally, in “Looking Forward and Making Plans”, students don’t need to memorize many facts because it’s mainly related to improving their living conditions which is mostly based in research.

The five dimensions of life skills education with an emphasis on their applicability in the Lebanese context.

Based on the previous discussion, we will now delve deeper into each of the 5 dimensions of life skills education. However, due to the manifold differences between Lebanon and the more advanced country, least of which is the language difference, we will also determine how applicable each of the dimensions is within the Lebanese context.

Self-care and hygiene dimension.

In order to be viewed as a member of the community and not just as a person residing on the sidelines, any individual is required to display certain standards of appearance and hygiene (Curtis, Schmidt, Luby, Florez, Toure, & Biran, 2011). Therefore, the dimension of Self-Care and Hygiene is the most basic of life skills and is a definite prerequisite for all other dimensions. By definition, it is the ability to maintain a clean and kempt appearance independently (Mosby, 2009). Self Care and Hygiene life skills may include the following skills:

- Dressing
- Grooming
- Bathing/Hygiene
- Feeding and Making Healthy Food Choices
- Toileting
- Using Medication

- Developing and Maintaining Fitness
- Maintaining awareness of safety
- Sexual Hygiene and Disease Prevention (Nova Scotia Education, 2011; Ditterline, Banner, Oakland, & Becton, 2008)

These skills are very common and international. They can be applied almost anywhere in the world provided basic resources such as water and soap are available. Moreover, in most countries, other resources related to sexual hygiene are available at low cost. However, the discussion, and therefore education, of some of these topics is not permitted in many countries due to religious or social taboos (Schooler, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2005). In Lebanon, the resources related to personal hygiene are available and therefore, these skills can be taught and assessed almost as efficiently as they are in the United States and Europe (El-Fadel, Zeinati, & Jamali, 2000). However, there is still some struggle regarding the subject of sexual education in schools and, even when sexual education is taught in schools, it is usually very limited or perceived from a strictly biological perspective (Khoury, 2013).

In the US and other developed countries, the assessment of this skill is usually undertaken by social workers assigned to the case of an individual with special needs assisted by a physician. Generally, they look at the individual's general cleanliness, general health, oral hygiene, and the healthiness of that person's living conditions (Glassman & Subar, 2008). On the other hand, in Lebanon, this is not the case, which makes parents almost solely responsible for looking after and maintaining the hygiene of their child with special needs. Later on, when the parents pass away, this responsibility is handed to one of the child's relatives or siblings who would sometimes hire the services of residential sheltered workshops who will charge large sums of money for taking care of the individual (Kronfol, 2012). Additionally, very few schools in

Lebanon do address the sexual education of individuals with special needs claiming that it is too difficult for them and that it might open their eyes to various perverse behaviors. Regardless, studies done in more developed countries have shown that there is a necessity to teach hygiene and sexual education to individuals with special needs; especially for the purpose of preventing STDs and future health problems due to malnutrition, obesity and other problems which are due to the lack of self-care and hygiene education (Rohleder, 2009).

Social communication and relationships.

Language teachers often forget the purpose of teaching a language to their students, and it is communication. In their very nature, humans are social beings and thrive in communities (Landa, 2005). Through these communications with the people around them, individuals build social relationships which may range from acquaintance to friendship to love (Beugelsdijk, Koen, & Noorderhaven, 2006). Social communications are a main difficulty with youths on the autism spectrum. They find it difficult to communicate with their community, and therefore, feel segregated or sometimes isolated. In order to help them integrate more in society, an education in social communication skills is vital (McLeod & McKinnon, 2007). This area includes some of the following life skills in no particular order:

- Fostering friendships
- Participating in community leisure activities
- Developing self esteem
- Participating in religious or spiritual activities
- Maintaining family relationships
- Understanding the social structure
- Communicating wants and needs respectfully

- Citizenship
- Marriage
- Understanding legal responsibilities (Nova Scotia Education, 2011; Pugia, 2008).

The teaching of this dimension is very delicate and varies sometimes greatly between different countries. While some gestures are considered positive in one part of the world, they may be very offensive in others. Moreover, different means of communication, like various intonations, may convey different hidden meanings of the same words (Lustig & Koester, 2012). This is where its fundamental importance lies; especially for individuals on the autism spectrum. Communication problems often lead to social problems and then evolve into various forms of anti-social behaviors. If these skills are taught and targeted at an early age, they can help avoid many problems later on. If not, they still need to be taught and practiced in order to enhance the chances of an individual with special needs to become more involved in society (Landry, Smith, & Swank, 2006).

In this dimension, applications vary between Lebanon and more developed countries such as United States or Europe. The skills which can be adapted easily are:

- “Fostering friendships” is essential because dealings with friends are reciprocal in most cases, which means that the friend will behave according to the individual’s behavior and vice versa. However, these skills need to be heavily worked on with individuals who have social disorders such some forms of autism and anti-social behaviors (Locke, Ishijima, Kasari, & London, 2010). Moreover, studies have shown that fostering friendships enhances almost all areas of the life of an individual with special needs (Kalyva & Avramidis, 2005).
- “Participating in community leisure activities” is also a skill that is applicable in any context. People play games and participate in community activities such as carnivals and clubs

everywhere in the world. Not only do these activities provide entertainment and fun for everyone, they also bring people together and also help in fostering friendships. This includes individuals with special needs as well (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). Moreover, this will help in promoting social inclusion of individuals with special needs within the society at large and, of course, under supervision (Solish, Perry, & Minnes, 2010).

- “Developing self esteem” is a definite prerequisite of any social communication or relationship skill. Self esteem is a universal skill that makes communications and interactions with other individuals possible. Many individuals with special needs develop self esteem issues due to their disabilities and sometimes end up being recluses unless proper intervention is administered (Pijl, Frostad, & Flem, 2008). Since the teaching of the skills related to self esteem require no physical facilities, they can be taught anywhere in the world provided with professional counselors and trained teachers (Horne & Timmons, 2009).

- “Participating in religious or spiritual activities” is the right of every person. Studies have shown that religious or spiritual activities such as prayer or meditation help individuals with special needs overcome some of their difficulties (Zhang & Rusch, 2005) just as it helps regular people feel more in touch with their inner selves (Cavarfordt & Sheridan, 2007). Almost all countries in the world, including Lebanon, protect the religious and spiritual freedom of their citizens, which makes it possible for skills related to this area to be taught.

- “Communicating wants and needs respectfully” is the final skill which can be adapted to the Lebanese context in the Social Communication and Relationships dimension. Many individuals with special needs cannot express their needs and some of them communicate them in inappropriate ways such as shouting, crying or other similar behaviors (Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2009). This skill is closely related to the area of “developing self esteem” in

regards to its ability for being taught in Lebanon since it requires no physical facilities, but trained professionals.

As for the other skills, they will have to be adjusted and modified in order to be adapted. “Maintaining family relationships” in Lebanon is rather different because parents are always more involved in their children’s lives no matter how old the latter may be (Kazarian, 2005). Therefore, the individual must be taught how to manage family relationships and how to keep them from becoming too obsessive and obtrusive. Regarding understanding the “social structure”, “citizenship”, and the “legal responsibilities”, in Lebanon, they are rather different from other countries. The social structure and the legal system are not the same as those in the US or EU, and therefore, the student needs to be taught the norms of the Lebanese society (Akar, 2007).

The assessment of these skills is not very straightforward because it is mainly done by and through the community in which the individual with special needs is included. When the student is still in school, which is a contained environment, the teachers and special educators who are in charge of him can keep an eye out and prompt him in the right direction (Dover, 2005). However, out in the real world, that person will either have a good life or not based on how well he can take care of himself, manage his behaviors, and take care of his friends and other similar skills. In the case where an individual with special needs is struggling to cope with himself and his environment, a counselor or social worker in other developed countries will be available for consultation to assist that individual and help him to get back on track (CLSA, 2011). In Lebanon, most special-need youths remain with their parents who may sometimes take them to a psychologist in case things are not going so well (Hatoum, 2010). However, most parents prefer not to take their child to a psychologist for fear of the public opinion (Al-Krenawi, 2005).

Housing and Commutation.

When a regular individual comes of age, it is only natural for him to look for a job and alternative housing. Eventually, he needs to leave his parents' house and move on to his own apartment or living arrangement. Additionally, he has to arrange transportation to his workplace and then back home. Many special needs youths; especially those with various types of intellectual disabilities, may find it difficult to live on their own or to use public transportations to go to work and come back home (Alias, 2013). This is because it's a big world out there and not everyone can successfully make it on their own. This dimension of life skills comprises some of the following skills:

- Managing time
- Moving about the community
- Exploring housing options
- Using public transportation
- Reading maps
- Maintaining housing and rental
- Cleaning up the house (Nova Scotia Education, 2011).

Because of the social and cultural differences between Lebanon and more advanced countries, the teaching of these skills varies greatly between Lebanon and the United States or European countries. As discussed in the section entitled "Social Workers and Communities for Adults with Special Needs" earlier in this literature review, in the States, an individual with special needs is expected to live on his own and in special communities designed for individuals with special needs (Mazurek & Winzer, 2010). There, they are regularly visited and assessed by social workers assigned to their cases who check up on them and make sure that everything is

going according to plan. Moreover, for more severe cases, transition plans are developed and begin to be executed two or three years before the individual with special needs is expected to move on to the community or to another housing option. This transition plan includes all the steps and the visits which are needed in order to make the individual's transition as smooth as possible (King, Baldwin, Currie, & Evans, 2005). On the other hand, in Lebanon, adults with special needs majorly end up living with their parents with close to no social life. Additionally, most will end up jobless and living off their parents and the government (Kronfol, 2012). This is mainly due to the fact that there are no special needs residential communities in Lebanon and it is not only the case for individuals with special needs. Many regular adults of both genders sometimes remain in their parents' houses well into their thirties or until they get married. Some of them even get married and live in their parents' homes with their spouses (Nasreddine, Hwalla, Sibai, Hamze, & Parent-Massin, 2006).

Regarding commutations, public transport in advanced American or European countries is very well-organized and regular, whereas in Lebanon, it is managed by private companies which have close to no organization. Competition within the companies may sometimes get personal, and public transport vehicles may suddenly change course (Khraiche, 2011). This undoubtedly affects the possibility of commutations for individuals with special needs. This is especially the case with individuals with autism who cannot cope with sudden changes and cannot deal with routine changes effectively. Therefore, individuals with special needs in Lebanon will either have to rely on private transport with one of their family members or by calling a cab, which will be very costly for parents with limited income. This is one of the major reasons behind parents opting to keep their children with special needs at home and without a

Career and money management.

Unless a person opts out for the hermit's life, money is an indispensable necessity. It is required for almost all areas of life, from purchasing goods and services to paying for bills and government taxes. Depending on the area or country where an individual lives, a minimum sum of money is necessary per month in order to insure an adequate living situation. To get the money a person needs without resorting to theft or begging, one has to have a job or a large inheritance. Moreover, with the ever rising cost of living expenses, a salary which rises accordingly is also required. Undoubtedly, individuals with special needs also need a salary in order to live and prosper. This would allow them to become independent and to pay their own bills and expenses. However, even if a special needs individual has a job, it doesn't mean that he can use money effectively (Mannix, 2009). Unfortunately, many individuals with special needs make their way well into adulthood through parental involvement without learning the value and usage of money (Kirby, Edwards, & Sugden, 2011). Some of them do realize that you need money to buy things but don't understand the concept of the monetary value of things. They may buy things which are too expensive and might get swindled by opportunists who realize these individuals' weaknesses (Ee & Soh, 2005).

On the other hand, finding a job and managing to keep it and advance in it also requires a large array of skills, which even some regular individuals struggle with as well. Employees need to understand their rights and responsibilities at work, know whether they are being paid fairly or not, cope with job stress, deal with colleagues, etc... Managing a person's own work life takes all these skills and many more. For a person with special needs; especially those with social or psychological difficulties, performing these skills is difficult and needs rigorous training before and during the career life (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). Moreover, when a person gets his salary, he

needs to be able to manage his spending and budget accordingly in order to stay out of debt or pay off loans. With individuals with attention related disorders, this is not an easy task as it requires a combination of information organization as well as basic math skills. Moreover, an individual with special needs has to find ways to keep this information on hand and be able to employ basic mental math in case there is a need to make on-the-spot financial decisions (Nordness, Haverkost, & Volberding, 2011). Therefore, career and money management skills go hand in hand in order to insure the survival of the individual in the corporate world. Some of the skills which belong to this area are:

- Coping with job stress
- Making Choices
- Understanding the world of work
- Developing portfolios and resumes
- Developing interview skills
- Assuming responsibility
- Understanding legal responsibilities
- Changing careers
- Understanding the value of money
- Balancing a checkbook
- Buying and selling
- Making payments
- Understanding banks (Nova Scotia Education, 2011; Cronin & Patton, 2001; CLSA, 2011).

Many other skills go under this area of life skills and they can be taught to many special needs individuals. In Lebanon, it is possible to teach these skills in theory through various

examples. In addition to that, there is a chance for individuals with special needs to practice these skills within a controlled environment. However, due to the over protection of parents, the chances of these skills for ever being put to use are very minimal and sometimes nonexistent (Sanders, 2006). As for the assessment of these skills, an authentic assessment whereby a student undertakes internships and is continuously assessed would be preferable (Hansen, 2003). However, in most cases where these skills are taught, their assessment is usually done in pen and paper exams due to the unavailability of sufficient internships to individuals with special needs in Lebanon (Bahous, 2008).

Even though all the skills in the list are very valuable to adults with special needs, in Lebanon, the skills, actually applicable among those on the list, would be those directly related to money management. These skills include:

- "Understanding the value of money" is one of the most basic skills in this dimension.

Individuals with special needs need to understand that one sum is bigger than another and whether a certain amount is or is not a fair price to pay for certain goods or services. The prime importance of this skill is to help these individuals to avoid being exploited or swindled out of their money by other people. In Lebanon, some schools do teach this to their students while some parents, who are usually more accepting of their child's special needs, complement this skill by allowing their child to go to the supermarket and make purchases. This is usually one of the best methods to help an individual with special needs practice using money and learn its value (Geller & Greenberg, 2009).

- "Buying and selling" is the next level of understanding the value of money. Many parents of students with special needs in Lebanon worry about the future of their children and try to plan for it as best as they can (Azar & Badr, 2006). Many of these parents sometimes leave their own

jobs when their children leave school and open a store or a supermarket where they work alongside their children. This is usually the best choice in the Lebanese context; especially that, despite paragraph 68 of Lebanese Law 2000/220, which should guarantee working rights for individuals with special needs, the vast majority of individuals with special needs' candidacy for a job is usually refused due to their disability (Universal Periodic Review, 2013). In order to allow these individuals to be productive in a store or supermarket environment, an understanding of buying and selling is; therefore, vital.

- "Making payments" is a skill, which is related to paying bills and loans. The difference between such payments and paying for buying goods is that such payments are usually cyclical, like paying the electricity and telephone bills, and larger than regular payments for goods. Therefore, this area incorporates the skills needed in understanding the value of and using money and skills related to general money management (Viswanathan, Rosa, & Harris, 2005). In Lebanon, individuals with special needs rarely have to make payments. Some of the payments, they might be asked to make, would be related to paying their mobile phone bill by purchasing a new recharge card (which renders it as a simple purchase skill) and maybe paying the cable and electricity generator bill when the person in charge comes to collect. However, in both cases, these actions require little to no thinking skills on the part of the individual with special needs.

If we look around Lebanon, due to the prejudice of the Lebanese mentality, we can rarely find an individual with special needs who knows how to efficiently use money. In most cases, they know that money is used to buy things, but they don't have to deal with adding and subtracting sums. This is due to the fact that their parents would rather do things for them instead of teaching them how to do it effectively (Hatoum, 2010). Moreover, even students with special needs who are taught how to use money at school will lose this skill when they leave school

because their parents will eventually buy stuff for them or send them to the supermarket with specific instructions on how much to pay and how much change to receive (Khochen & Radford, 2012).

Looking forward and making plans.

What keeps a person going and fighting through the struggles of daily life is the ability to think of or dream about a better future. Without this ability, the rate of suicide and depression diagnoses would soar (Beck & Alford, 2009). Looking forward towards life and one's own future is probably one of the most important areas, which affect the wellbeing and self-esteem of an individual, let alone one with special needs (Heller, Caldwell, & Hasazi, 2006). This area helps individuals with special needs learn how to dream, limit their dreams, and make their dreams come true. While skills needed to make plans and organize events can be taught in school, actual practice needs to be done in real life with other people (Hansen, 2003). The main purpose of this dimension is to help an individual understand his place and role in the world and how to make better choices. In this dimension, we can include many skills such as:

- Understanding personal strengths and challenges
- Setting goals and making plans within a timeframe
- Saving money for a purpose
- Understanding insurance
- Voting and elections
- Problem solving (Hansen, 2003).

Perhaps out of the 5 dimensions of life skills, this one is the most interesting and yet the most difficult to teach. This is probably due to the preconceptions of some parents and other individuals in the society regarding these individuals' inability to truly think for themselves and

make their own choices (ElZein, 2009). However, multiple studies have shown that many individuals with special needs, except those with severe mental difficulties, can make informed choices given the information in a way that is up to their level (Nilholm, 2006). Most of these skills can be taught and practiced in a regular classroom. However, assessing them needs to be authentic whereby individuals with special needs who have come of age actually make plans for their future, participate in elections and plan, and execute events for their friends (Dover, 2005). In the United States and Europe, social workers take care of assessing and re-teaching these skills to struggling individuals with special needs and make sure that they fight for their rights and have a chance to improve their lives (Frost, Robinson, & Anning, 2005). Unfortunately, in Lebanon, the social structure, facilities and personnel needed in order to monitor and assist individuals with special needs in an authentic environment does not exist. Most individuals with special needs may dream of a better future for themselves, but they do not have the power, freedom, or support to pursue their dreams. Some of them may also participate in the parliamentary elections, but they have no idea what they are doing except for what their parents, who were told what to do by a higher authority, tell them to do (Wehbi & El-Lahib, 2008). Therefore, even if the individuals were taught these values at school, they will not be expected to keep them in mind when they graduate (Hatoum, 2010). The skills, which may be kept alive after school, may be:

-“Understanding personal strengths and challenges” is a valuable skill for individuals with special needs especially after they become aware of their own disabilities. Many studies have shown that individuals who are aware of their own special needs tend to manage their lives a lot better than those who are kept in the dark (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005).

Unfortunately, in Lebanon, parents and caregivers tend to keep individuals with special needs

unaware of their difficulties. This, in turn, causes these individuals to become more naïve and more frustrated with their predicament (ElZein, 2009). Therefore, helping these individuals to become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses would allow us to lay the groundwork upon which we can build more aware and productive individuals despite their special needs. -“Saving money for a purpose” is a skill which is rooted in self-discipline and organization skills. Through it, not only are students taught to save money, but to limit their expenses and look to buy something they need more in the future (Hansen, 2003). For example, instead of buying a chocolate bar today, they are helped to save up to buy something they want more, like a laptop, later. Saving money and regularly checking up on it and recounting it will help individuals with special needs to keep remembering the value of the bills and the coins and the usage of money. Moreover, it will provide something for them to look forward to and plan for (Mannix, 2009). This skill is applied in Lebanon with some individuals with special needs; however, the steps required to take it to its fullest potential are usually disregarded. Therefore, activities involving saving money become solely about putting money in a piggy bank with no real explanation to why it is being done.

Undoubtedly, these two skills will help in enhancing the wellbeing and sense of purpose for individuals with special needs as many studies have shown (Dover, 2005). The problem in Lebanon is that sometimes, even the families of individuals with special needs don't believe in their children, and, when they do, there is no social system available to support them to make the best of what they can (Khochen & Radford, 2012).

Possible low-skill occupations for individuals with special need.

Every person with special needs, depending on his case, can do something to earn a living provided with the right support and scaffolding (Naidoo, 2011). Of course, the individuals

with special needs who have cognitive delays or intellectual disabilities and are the targeted beneficiaries of this study have many jobs that they can occupy as well. Surely, we cannot expect them to become doctors, teachers, or engineers among other similar professions, which rely highly on cognitive skills. Hoping for something like that would be like hoping that a fish would fly someday. Unfortunately, many parents do not recognize the strengths and the limitations of their children with special needs which end up creating more pressure and more failure (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008).

According to a study done in Canada, which is a developed country, showed that around 32% of individuals with intellectual disabilities are employed in the sales and services sector, around 20% in financial businesses, around 18% in trades, transport, equipment and operators while the remaining are spread around other areas (Crawford, 2011). Moreover, a recent study funded by the Australian government done on employers of individuals with intellectual disabilities in Cambodia, which is a country under development, showed that there are some types of jobs, which are accessible for individuals with special needs in different sectors such as making and painting furniture, cooking, cleaning tables in a restaurant, working in the bar area of a restaurant, as long as they don't have to interact with customers (Aide et Action, 2012). This goes to show that regardless of the country where individuals with special needs reside, it is always possible to provide some jobs for them as long as these jobs are rendered accessible through various means which may include:

- For individuals with reading difficulties, pictures may be used as reminders, verbal or voice-recorded instructions instead of written ones, etc...

- For individuals with writing difficulties, fill-in-the-blanks-forms may be provided instead of blank templates, verbal or recorded responses can be accepted, scribe assistance may be provided, etc...
 - For individuals with memory issues, checklists and written instructions may be provided, verbal prompts can be used, pictorial instructions can be placed on frequently used machines, etc...
 - For individuals with calculation problems, the use of calculators may be encouraged, ticker and counters may be used instead of counting by memory, sizes and measurements may be marked in colored pen, etc...
 - For individuals with problems in organization or time management, color coding can be used, clutter and workplace reorganization should be minimized, tasks can be divided into smaller tasks, schedules can be written or recorded, task lists can be numbered, etc...
 - For individuals with communication or social problems, one person can be specified to give instructions, daily evaluation can be encouraged, issues should be discussed as they arise, etc...
- (Job Accommodation Network, 2013).

By providing these small and inexpensive strategies, more individuals with special needs will be able to access the job market more easily. However, just like the teacher and the students need to be prepared when a student with special needs is included in the classroom, the employers and the employees need to also be prepared when an individual with special needs is included in the workplace. This will not only make it easier for the individuals to integrate among their colleagues, it will also make it simpler for the colleagues to accept that individual and know how to deal with him. This is usually the responsibility of the social worker assigned to these cases (Miller & Chan, 2008).

The need for a life skills program in Lebanon.

Without any doubt, the teaching and assessment of life skills in individuals with special needs and learning or intellectual difficulties is extremely important if we expect these individuals to become productive members of society. However, in order to effectively apply and assess life skills, a social structure has to be in place. This structure, which is made of communities for individuals with special needs and resident or visiting social workers, is available in many advanced countries. Unfortunately, the closest we have to it in Lebanon are residential sheltered workshops for individuals with special needs, which serve to promote further exclusion from society. Otherwise, parents or caregivers are expected to keep taking care of individuals with special needs well into their adult and even elderly lives (Hatoum, 2010). Moreover, while laws for the inclusion and employment of individuals with special needs in Lebanon exist but aren't applied, local advocacy groups try to acquire more rights for individuals with special needs (Flemming-Farrell, 2013). This is especially the case for the law mandating that each company employ a certain percentage of individuals with special needs (Wehbi & El-Lahib, 2007). However, even though the law may be passed and individuals with special needs may have access to more job opportunities, without the support of a well organized social structure this will create more of a hassle for the parents and the caregivers who will have to play even more roles than they do today including the roles attributed to social workers.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As has been discussed throughout the literature review as well as the introduction for this research, the overall objective is to find out what life skills are employed by low-skill workers in Lebanon. Moreover, from this collection, I wanted to come out with a list of life skills used as a basis for a life skills curriculum, which is adapted for the community of individuals with special needs residing in Lebanon. Additionally, I wanted to find out how foreign life skills curricula can be adapted to a Lebanese context and at what age individuals with special needs can be placed under such a curriculum.

The research questions which this research attempts to deal with are restated below:

- 1- Knowing that there are many social and cultural differences between Lebanon and more advanced countries such as the USA, what are the life skills needed for an individual to survive in Lebanon?
- 2- How can we adapt a life skills curriculum taken from a more advanced country in the field of special education to the Lebanese individuals with special needs?
- 3- At what point in their lives should Lebanese individuals with special needs be placed under a life skills curriculum?

For the researcher to be able to answer these research questions, 24 low-skill workers from different nationalities and backgrounds working in Lebanon were interviewed. In this chapter, we will be discussing the population selection, data collection, and analysis process employed in collecting the information used as a basis for this research.

Research Design

Qualitative vs. quantitative research.

When the purpose of a research project is to collect numeric data and to find exact sums and percentages, a quantitative approach would be recommended. However, when the purpose is to gather opinions and ideas, quantitative data cannot be sufficient, that is if it can yield any results in the first place. Therefore, while quantitative data enables researchers to find out how things are by measuring and collecting data about them, qualitative data is the means to find out what these things are by delving deeper into people's opinions and perspectives.

While quantitative research provides clear and concise ways of gathering and analyzing data, qualitative research is the exact opposite and takes intensive work from the part of the researcher. On the other hand, when no categories for analysis are available to start with, it is qualitative and not quantitative research which will help researchers to gain insight into important attitudes and perspectives (Silverman, 2011).

On the other hand, quantitative research starts with one or more hypotheses and attempts to verify their veracity or falsehood based on widely gathered data, while qualitative research starts with specific questions and aims to find their answers through interactions between the researcher and the subjects of the research. This can be done through questionnaires, interviews, anecdotal observations, etc... Even though the debate between qualitative and quantitative researchers still rages on, it is clear that each method has a purpose and a methodology whereby it answers the researcher's questions (Flick, 2014).

Why choose a qualitative approach for this type of research?

Going back to the research questions of this study, it is clear that the main aim of this project is to find out what life skills can be used in Lebanon. In the literature review, I have

mentioned that most life skills are unconsciously applied, and the individuals applying them don't realize that they are calling forth these particular life skills. Moreover, even though some of the employed life skills are clear to researchers and can easily be stated, other life skills, especially those used by the low skill workers who are the subjects of this research, may not be fully applicable to the researcher's lives, and therefore, cannot be easily recalled or stated. Thus, if a researcher is to come up with this list or to use a pre-created and validated instrument and ask low skill workers to use or rate it, thereby making the research quantitative, the results would be reflective of either the researcher's opinions or the opinions of foreign researchers. However, since the main purpose is to find out what life skills are used by low skill workers, the most logical method of going about it would be to interview some of them and compile a list through their answers.

Research Model

Many qualitative research models are based on social sciences and interactions with people. For this research, the model chosen to be applied is the semi-structured interview. In general, interviews, even though in some cases they can be affected by the researcher's bias, offer many benefits and valuable insights into people's lives. According to Woods (2011), some of the benefits of interviews include access to a wider range of data about a certain topic, a better means to answer certain questions and a wider range of flexibility for the researcher. Moreover, they are the most widely used research methods in social sciences research.

There are three types of interviews applied for research: structured, in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Each has its own pros and cons covered here:

1- Structured interviews allow for an exact replication of the interview for other research. The results obtained in structured interviews are more widely generalized among the population

whence the sample comes from. Additionally, these interviews, which include surveys and questionnaires can be conducted in different ways such as telephone conversations, face-to-face conferences, and e-mails, and will still provide the same results. On the other hand, structured interviews can be limiting to research and, even though they yield quantifiable data, this data may not be sufficient enough to answer the research questions.

2- In-depth interviews are sometimes unstructured and offer a wider range of flexibility for the researcher through allowing spontaneous questions, which, in turn, provide even deeper insights into the topic being studied. However, in-depth interviews, due to their spontaneity, may prove difficult to replicate and generalize. Moreover, they rely heavily on the interviewer's skills in interviewing and require a lot of time and effort.

3- Semi-structured interviews lie between in-depth and structured interviews. Through the kinds of questions asked and the allowance of limited spontaneity, these types of interviews are more reliable than in-depth interviews and provide more details than structured interviews. Moreover, they are more comfortable than structured interviews since they allow for a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee, and than in-depth interviews since they allow the interviewer to guide the interviewee in order to avoid unnecessary straying in the conversation.

As stated earlier, for this research, I will be using a semi-structured interview. The questions asked in this interview can be seen in Appendix A.

Participants

In order to insure the accuracy and variety of data gathered through interviews, a total of 24 people from different qualifying walks of life were selected. In order to qualify, the participants have to be working in low skill jobs in Lebanon, be of different age ranges, different

family situations, different genders and different years of service. The following tables summarize the differences in the sample which was selected for this research:

Table 1: Job Distribution of Research Participants

Type of Job	Number of Participants	Percentage
Concierge	3	12.5
Gardener	2	8.33
Housemaid	3	12.5
Bus Driver	2	8.33
Army	1	4.16
Security	2	8.33
Supermarket	3	12.5
Cook	3	12.5
Waiter/Waitress	3	12.5
Delivery	2	8.33

Table 2: Age Ranges of Research Participants

Age Range	Participants	Percentage
Between 20 and 25	7	29.16
Between 26 and 30	4	16.66
Between 31 and 40	7	29.16
Over 40	6	25

Table 3: Family Situations of Research Participants

Status	With Kids	Without Kids	Percentage with kids	Percentage without kids
Married	7	1	29.16	4.16
Engaged	5	-	20.83	-
Single	11	-	45.83	-

Table 4: Gender Distribution of Research Participants

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	17	70.83
Female	7	29.16

Table 5: Years of Service of Research Participants

Number of Years	Participants	Percentage
1 or less	5	20.83
Between 2 and 4	8	33.33
Between 5 and 10	6	25
More than 10	5	20.83

The nature of the selection process helped in ensuring the variety of responses given due to the fact that in each of the occupations mentioned in Table 1 different life skills are employed. The participants were selected from different regions in Lebanon including Beirut, Mount

Lebanon Keserwan, and Southern and Northern Lebanon. However, we must point out that the participants from Northern and Southern Lebanon were interviewed in their dorms in Beirut. In some cases, the participants referred the researchers to other participants, which made these interviewees more comfortable during the interviews.

Instruments

The interview questions in Appendix A were the main instruments for gathering the data needed for this research. Each of the questions was designed to target key dimensions of a person's life and what life skills are needed in each of these dimensions; in addition to gathering socio-demographic data about the participants. The general duration of each interview was between 10 and 20 minutes. The participants answered the questions orally while the interviewer took notes. In Table 6 below, the targeted dimensions of each question are stated.

Table 6: Expected Target Dimensions in Interview Questions

Interview Question Number	Question	Expected Targeted Dimensions
1	What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?	Gathering demographic data
2	What is your daily routine?	Getting familiar with the participant General life skills areas
3	How do you feel about working in Lebanon?	Career and money management Looking forward and making plans
4	What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?	Self care and hygiene
5	Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?	Self care and hygiene
6	What is your favorite pastime with friends?	Social communication and relationships

7	Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?	Social communication and relationships
8	How did you get to make your friends?	Social communication and relationships
9	How's your relationship with your family?	Social communication and relationships
10	What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?	Social communication and relationships
11	What are your responsibilities regarding your house?	Housing and commutation
12	What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?	Housing and commutation
13	How did you get your current job?	Career and money management
14	Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?	Career and money management Looking forward and making plans
15	Do you use the bank? How?	Career and money management Looking forward and making plans
16	What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?	General life skills areas
17	Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?	Looking forward and making plans
18	What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?	Social communication and relationships

Even though each of the questions had intended target answers, some of the questions sometimes yielded different answers from other target dimensions. This was to be expected because of the nature of the semi-structured interview, which allows for such cases and for wider flexibility. Regardless, these answers were still taken into consideration and then reassigned into

their appropriate categories during the data processing stage. Additionally, sometimes some questions contained the answers to other questions. In these cases, the previously answered questions were not asked again.

Data Processing and Analysis

After the interviews were done and rewritten in appropriate language, they were reread by the researcher, and, whenever a life skill was found, it was highlighted and then labeled according to which life skills dimension it belonged to (Self Care and Hygiene (SCH), Social Communication and Relationships (SCR), Housing and Commutation (HC), Career and Money Management (CMM) and Looking Forward and Making Plans (LFMP)). Afterwards, the highlighted skills were rephrased using standardized skill terminologies and grouped together according to skill dimensions. After that, all double mentions were grouped together in each dimension until only one mention of each skill was present. Due to the large variety and complexity of the skills found in each dimension, the researcher then decided to group the skills in each dimension according to the , first subcategories and sometimes second subcategories:

Table 7: Dimensions and Subcategories of Life Skills

Dimensions	First Subcategory	Second Subcategory
Self Care and Hygiene	Personal Hygiene	
	Preserving Health	Dieting and Exercise
		Avoiding and Caring for Illnesses
	Caring for Personal Appearance	
Social Communication and Relationships	General Social Skills	
	Activities with Friends	
	Asking for Help and Other Services	
	Managing Family Relationships	
	Dealing with Government or Official Procedures	
	Healthy Work Relationships	
Housing and Commutation	Housing	General Chores

		Cooking Chores
	Commutation	Walking or Using Personal Vehicles
		Using Public Transport
Career and Money Management	Job Application Skills	
	Occupational Practice	
	Money Management	
	Using Banks and Financial Services	
Looking Forward and Making Plans	Religious and Spiritual Practices	
	Improving Lifestyles	
	Planning and Thinking Ahead	
	Being with a Significant Other	

In some rare instances, certain skills were found to belong in two or more dimensions at once. In such cases, these skills were broken down into the components, which belong in each dimension and placed accordingly. For example, the skill “saving money for getting married” belongs in both dimensions of “Career and Money Management” and “Looking Forward and Making Plans.” Therefore, the “saving money” part of the skill remained in “Career and Money Management” while the actual purpose, which is for the marriage, was placed in the “Looking Forward and Making Plans” dimension.

Ethical Considerations

Since this research study relies on human interviewees to answer the questions, certain ethical considerations had to be insured; especially interviewee approval and confidentiality. In order to acquire approval, the aims and purposes of the interviews were clarified to the respondents in the Arabic or English language based on their backgrounds. In some instances, the researcher had to use a mixture of languages in order to make sure that the respondents understood that they are not forced to participate in any way and can withdraw from the study at any time before the publication of the final paper. As for confidentiality, all the names and last names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms. Moreover, the specific names of the

interviewees' workplaces and any relevant personal information were not mentioned in the interviews to preserve privacy. Only relevant information, which was necessary for answering the research questions, was included.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

After the interviews have been conducted (Appendix B), the life skills presented throughout the interviews were then extracted and organized according to the 5 dimensions of life skills identified in the literature review. Moreover, since the list of skills in each dimension was extensive and complicated, skills were then grouped together according to subcategories, as detailed in Table 7 in the methodology chapter. In this chapter, the compiled lists of life skills which are the subject of the first research question are introduced and the two remaining research questions are also answered.

Research Question 1

Knowing that there are many social and cultural differences between Lebanon and more advanced countries such as the USA, what are the life skills needed for an individual to survive in Lebanon?

To answer this question, we have to go into the life skills dimensions and detail each of them separately. Moreover, whenever a skill is deemed unclear, examples are provided to clarify it. Additionally, the skills lists are arranged in alphabetical order in order to avoid possible misunderstanding regarding the importance of each skill.

Self care and hygiene.

As explained in the literature review, this life skills dimension contains the most basic life skills, which can be considered as prerequisites to other life skills as well as a productive life. This dimension is divided into three subcategories.

Personal Hygiene.

It is the first subcategory in the Self Care and Hygiene dimension. As the name implies, it contains everything related to taking care of an individual's cleanliness and hygiene. It is made of the following skills:

- Brushing teeth thoroughly
- Removing body hair with various means
- Shaving with a razor or an electric shaver
- Showering and making sure that all the body is clean
- Washing hands.

Preserving Health.

It is the second subcategory in the Self Care and Hygiene dimension. It deals with various means of taking someone's health and is divided into two subcategories.

Dieting and Exercise.

It deals with everything related to preventive measures which allow a person to take care of his health and preserve it from harm or illness. It is made of the following skills:

- Choosing a diet and watching what to eat
- Choosing daily exercise routines
- Drinking water to stay hydrated
- Going to the gym
- Knowing what affects performance (like eating before intense physical activities)
- Making and eating healthy food.

Avoiding and Caring for Illnesses.

It deals with everything related to protecting oneself from various illnesses and using medications or certain food diets in order to avoid serious health problems. It is made of the following skills:

- Deciding what to take and wear based on the weather
- Deciding when to relax and take a break
- Getting tested regularly for various illnesses
- Knowing when an illness interferes with religious duties
- Taking care of old age, permanent or long-term illnesses
- Taking medication according to doctor's prescriptions
- Understanding the dangers of smoking and alcohol.

Caring for Personal Appearance.

This is the last subcategory of the Self Care and Hygiene dimension and it deals with things related to choosing what to wear based on different occasions and how to display the most positive image of oneself to others. It is made of the following skills:

- Fixing hair
- Getting dressed appropriately according to the occasion
- Staying clean and changing clothes when they get dirty
- Using deodorant
- Using hair gel
- Using makeup and nail polish
- Wearing work uniform.

Social communication and relationships.

It is the life skills dimension, which is most interconnected with all others since it deals with various types of communications, be it with friends, colleagues or professionals in different fields. It can be divided into six subcategories.

General social skills.

This subcategory is made of the skills which are general and more or less universal among human beings. It is made of the following skills:

- Asking for advice when in doubt
- Being careful and protecting oneself while in public
- Being part of a religious community
- Being respectful
- Choosing gifts
- Deciding when to be patient and when to be quick
- Deciding who to trust
- Knowing when and how to express anger
- Pinpointing a problem and finding a solution
- Planning and going on trips
- Preparing meals for visitors
- Receiving visitors
- Understanding and dealing with people's personalities and temperaments
- Understanding and sharing jokes and humor
- Understanding loyalty and cooperation
- Using social media to stay in touch with family and friends

- Using the phone.

Activities with friends.

This subcategory contains skills which are related to doing things with friends. It contains the following skills:

- Choosing a place to get together
- Choosing a romantic partner from among friends
- Dividing the price fairly among friends when paying a shared bill
- Getting together with friends at home
- Going shopping with friends
- Going to the gym together
- Introducing friends to other friends
- Joining clubs
- Keeping friends
- Knowing when to let a friend go
- Making new friends
- Playing games with friends
- Sleeping over at a friend's house
- Smoking, doing Shisha and drinking alcohol with friends
- Solving problems and misunderstandings with friends
- Visiting friends.

Asking for help and other professional services.

This subcategory is somehow connected with almost everything else because it deals with asking for various services from different professionals. The skills included in this subcategory are the following:

- Bargaining with salespeople to get a better price
- Calling a doctor
- Consulting a pharmacist
- Dealing with bills and tax collectors
- Going to a dietician
- Going to a psychologist
- Going to the hospital
- Ordering a cab
- Ordering a food or groceries delivery.

Managing family relationships.

This subcategory deals with everything related to family, be it close or extended. It includes the following skills:

- Being friendly with neighbors
- Caring for aging family members
- Dealing with the death of a loved one
- Helping the partner
- Helping one's parents financially
- Spending quality time with family and children
- Staying in touch with relatives

- Taking care of one's family.

Dealing with government or official procedures.

In this subcategory, we list skills related to official procedures related to dealing with the government or other official or diplomatic agencies. Following are the skills included in this subcategory:

- Applying for visas
- Dealing with the "Mokhtar"¹ (or other government representatives)
- Dealing with the municipality
- Joining unions and syndicates
- Registering children when they are born
- Renewing passports
- Renewing residency papers when working abroad
- Sending money using money transfer companies
- Taking the car for a mechanical checkup and renewing its insurance policy
- Using Liban Post² services
- Using Social Security.

Healthy work relationships.

Even though this subcategory may also be classified in the Career and Money Management dimension, I preferred to include it in the dimension of Social Communication and Relationships since it deals directly with social relationships between colleagues. The skills included in this subcategory are the following:

¹ Refers to the head of a village in Arab countries and is often chosen through an election process. Typically, a Mokhtar takes care of most government businesses in the stead of the people in the village he serves.

² In Lebanon, Liban Post takes care of acquiring many types of legal documents for people for a fee. Even though people can acquire these documents themselves, many prefer Liban Post services to avoid traffic and waiting in line.

- Avoiding problems with annoying colleagues
- Being friendly with colleagues
- Choosing between friends and family and work
- Cooperating with colleagues and supervisors
- Dealing with new employees
- Having a good attitude at work
- Knowing when to involve others in a problem
- Knowing which colleagues to trust and which to be careful of.

Housing and Commutation

This dimension deals with everything related to choosing a place to live, taking care of it and commuting between it, work and other places. It is divided into two subcategories.

Housing.

This subcategory contains skills which are related to an individual's living arrangements. It is divided into two subcategories.

General Chores.

This housing subcategory includes skills which are used in taking care of the house excluding cooking. It contains the following skills:

- Choosing and buying furniture
- Cleaning and tidying personal quarters
- Cleaning the bathroom
- Closing down the house when leaving
- Doing the laundry, hanging clothes to dry, folding and arranging clothes
- Fix broken things around the house and deciding what to throw away

- Helping others with home chores
- Living with parents
- Locking safes and other personal objects
- Mopping floors
- Paying home bills and taxes like water, electricity, generator, etc...
- Preparing to sleep at someone else's place
- Recycling garbage
- Renting a house
- Sharing living quarters with someone (roommate, partner, etc...)
- Sweeping
- Taking care of plants
- Turning on generator.

Cooking Chores.

I preferred to separate this subcategory from the general chores because cooking, in itself, calls upon various skills including the following:

- Buying groceries
- Carrying food to tables
- Cleaning and preparing tables
- Cleaning kitchen after use
- Cleaning up after eating
- Cooking for a number of people
- Doing dishes
- Making coffee and other hot beverages

- Preparing ingredients for a meal
- Restocking fridge and pantry.

Commutation.

It is the second subcategory in the Housing and Commutation dimension. It deals with what is related to transport being in private vehicles or in public transport and is divided into two subcategories.

Walking or Using Personal Vehicles.

Even though many Lebanese people are skeptical regarding the allowance of individuals with special needs to drive or own their personal vehicles, Lebanese Law 220 Article 52 concerning individuals with special needs states that “Any individual with special needs has the right to apply to and obtain a driving license for a public vehicle of any kind or category according to applied rules and regulations.” Therefore, in this subcategory, the following skills are included:

- Being careful of other vehicles
- Carpooling
- Choosing the better vehicle for the situation based on parking availability (choosing a smaller vehicle if available in case parking spaces are limited)
- Choosing what to take based on the weather (umbrella, hat, coat, etc...)
- Crossing the street
- Dealing with the insurance company in case of accident
- Driving a motorcycle
- Filling the tank with appropriate type of gasoline
- Getting a driver’s license

- Knowing how to drive and everything related to driving in Lebanon
- Knowing the roads and the road signs
- Knowing where to walk when there is no sidewalk
- Locking and unlocking vehicles
- Maintaining vehicles (cleaning, checkups, etc...)
- Repairing vehicles or consulting mechanics
- Using seatbelts
- Walking to work and knowing when to leave the house to arrive on time.

Using Public Transport.

Even though this subcategory of life skills related to housing and commutation is not very well organized in Lebanon, the following life skills were mentioned in it:

- Asking bus driver for advice regarding best place to get off the bus
- Being aware if the driver changes course during a ride
- Being aware of the dangers involved in using public transport (theft, loss of belongings, etc...)
- Knowing the approximate fares of buses, Services³, and taxis
- Knowing how and when to ask the bus to stop
- Knowing the meaning of bus numbers and the direction they are driving in
- Knowing where and when to switch between buses
- Knowing where to wait for a bus and how to signal for a bus or Service to stop
- Taking bus or Service
- Traveling in groups when going to dangerous neighborhoods

³ A Service is a means of public transport in Lebanon whereby a taxi car will pick up passengers on its way and drive them for short distances. Services are a lot cheaper than regular taxis but a bit more expensive than buses.

- Using bus maps

Career and Money Management

In this dimension, all skills related to work life and using money are listed. It is divided into four subcategories ranging from applying to jobs to doing actual work to using money and bank services.

Job application.

In this subcategory, we deal with the process related to applying for jobs and sitting for job interviews. The following life skills are included in this subcategory:

- Applying for jobs through the internet
- Building a personal CV by adding experiences
- Choosing the best job offer after comparing the pros and cons
- Filling applications and forms
- Finding the pros and cons of a job
- Job hunting and finding vacancies
- Preparing and sitting for a job interview
- Using classified ads to find jobs.

Occupational practice.

Even though each type of occupation has its own set of skills which are applicable to it alone, there are certain skills which are universally applicable. This category contains the following skills:

- Avoiding political and religious debates at work
- Being flexible and able to juggle different tasks
- Being good to clients

- Being punctual and having time management
- Checking with and reporting to the manager
- Coping with job stress
- Dealing with annoying customers
- Dealing with salary deductions
- Deciding to quit a job
- Getting promoted
- Knowing when and how to ask for advice at work
- Knowing when to involve others in solving a problem
- Knowing your limits at work
- Organizing sleep based on work shifts
- Planning for a retirement
- Prioritizing tasks
- Reporting personal absences
- Risks and benefits of having a personal business
- Sitting in meetings and appropriate behaviors
- Solving problems on the job
- Taking a break
- Taking leaves of absence or days off
- Understanding importance of personal appearance at work
- Understanding the risks and benefits of investment
- Understanding relationship between types of work and expected salaries
- Understanding work responsibilities and ethics

- Understanding working in shifts
- Using a work roster
- Working freelance
- Working with colleagues or in a team
- Working with relatives and friends
- Working without a schedule (on call).

Money management.

In this subcategory, we deal with everything related to practical uses of money such as buying and selling, paying and receiving payment, etc... The following skills are included:

- Balancing income and expenses
- Bargaining to get a better price
- Checking change after paying
- Choosing whether to hire a service or do things on one's own
- Comparing items for quality and price
- Dealing with debt
- Getting paid and giving change
- Giving and receiving tips
- Helping family with income
- Keeping, checking and organizing receipts
- Knowing how much is reasonable to pay for everyday items
- Knowing whether something is affordable or not based on monthly income and expenses
- Paying bills
- Paying shared bills and dividing sums

- Saving money

Using banks and other financial services.

This is the final subcategory of the Career and Money Management dimension. It deals with everything related to using the various services included in a bank as well as other financial services such as money transfer. The following skills are included:

- Communicating with bank employees
- Getting paid through the bank
- Paying online
- Saving money in the bank
- Understanding credit cards, debit cards and checks
- Understanding loans and interest
- Using ATM cards
- Using joint bank accounts
- Using money transfer services.

Looking forward and making plans.

This dimension is interconnected with all other dimensions, because it deals with the future of any person and his ability to plan events before executing them. It is divided into four subcategories.

Religious and spiritual practices.

Even though some individuals do not really care about religions nowadays, there are others who find it indispensable. Therefore, in this subcategory, we deal not with any religion in particular, but with skills related to the practice of any religion in order to avoid extreme fanaticism or harming obsessions. I chose to include these skills within the dimension of

Looking Forward and Making Plans because religion, in itself, is a way of looking forward and making plans for an eventual afterlife. The following skills can be included:

- Different methods of praying
- Fitting religious duties onto a busy workload
- Forming a personal spiritual view
- Observing religious duties and feasts
- Praying while working
- Raising kids in a family with mixed religions
- Safe methods of fasting.

Improving lifestyles.

In this subcategory, we list skills related to making one's life a better and easier one through different means. Some of the skills mentioned can also be included in the Career and Money Management dimension also. The following skills can be included:

- Comparing job offers
- Getting promotions
- Knowing when to quit
- Moving to another country and working abroad
- Saving money for a purpose
- Starting a business
- Understanding the value of education for oneself and one's children
- Using technology safely.

Planning and thinking ahead.

In this subcategory, skills related to making plans are included and listed. These skills are important to any person seeking to improve his life or simply to plan his day in the most optimal way. The following skills are included:

- Being familiar with politics and avoiding certain areas of Lebanon during politically influenced events
- Checking for possible problems and addressing them before they occur
- Double checking change received or sum to be paid
- Learning from personal mistakes on the job
- Making lists of things to do
- Planning for the children's future
- Refilling gas before the tank is empty
- Saving money to start own business
- Saving money for emergencies
- Saving money for marriage
- Setting an alarm
- Spraying pesticides to repel insects and pests
- Watching the news and the weather forecast to plan accordingly
- Working on a retirement plan.

Being with a significant other.

In everyone's life, there is always a special someone with whom we fall in love and decide to plan a life together. It is the same for individuals with special needs, and they also have

the right to fall in love, get married and even have a family. The following skills deal with this area of life:

- Buying or renting a family house
- Choosing the right partner
- Dealing with arranged marriage
- Dealing with and resolving problems with the partner
- Deciding to have kids
- Getting a civil marriage
- Getting engaged
- Getting married in a religious ceremony
- Meeting the family of the partner
- Planning a wedding ceremony and reception
- Providing for children
- Saving money for marriage
- Shopping for a wedding
- Starting a family
- Taking care of parents after marriage

Research Question 2

How can we adapt a life skills curriculum taken from a more advanced country in the field of special education to the Lebanese individuals with special needs?

Now that we have a complete list of life skills needed for low skill workers in Lebanon, the areas, which can or cannot be adopted or adapted from foreign curricula, can be specified.

The following are the categories, which cannot be adopted from foreign curricula but need to be created anew for a Lebanese context:

- Dealing with Government or Official Procedures: This subcategory of Social Communication and Relationships cannot be adopted due to the fact that, in many more advanced countries, the initiation of these procedures starts online before a person is to go to the government unit in charge of these procedures. Moreover, the concept of a “Mokhtar” who takes care of some government procedures is not available in most, if not any advanced countries, but in Lebanon, a large variety of government procedures start with the “Mokhtar”.
- Using Public Transport: This subcategory of the Housing and Commutation dimension cannot be adopted from more advanced curricula because the public transport system, which exists in Lebanon is not as organized and as punctual as that of the United States, Europe, or Australia. Moreover, in Lebanon, bus stops have fallen into disuse a long time ago and buses can stop anywhere they please and whenever they are signaled by a passenger.

Following are the subcategories partially adapted from foreign curricula with some modifications:

- Asking for Help and Other Professional Services: This subcategory of the Social Communication and Relationships dimension can be partially adapted from foreign curricula since consulting with doctors and pharmacists and other professionals is almost the same anywhere in the world. The only minor differences would be the fact that, due to relaxed professional laws, many professionals are able to advise in professions close to theirs. For example, many pharmacists do diagnose and prescribe medications in Lebanon, something which is not very common in many other countries.

- **Managing Family Relationships:** Even though many families in Lebanon are beginning to embrace American or European principles, family bonds in Lebanon remain different than those in more advanced countries because families are still close. This subcategory of Social Communications and Relationships has to be more developed than that of foreign countries and it has to include more skills, which enable a person to manage and maintain these relationships.
- **General Chores and Housing Chores:** Both of these subcategories of the Housing and Commutation dimension can be adapted in part from foreign curricula. Moreover, due to the prevalent gender bias in Lebanon, many families will not expect or even accept males to be proficient in these skills while females are expected to know and use them. Currently, more and more males are learning these skills; especially when they decide to leave their parents' homes before they get married, which is still not very common in Lebanon. However, were it not for these biases and expectations, these skills would have been able to be taken wholly from foreign curricula.
- **Religious and Spiritual Practices:** This subcategory of the Looking Forward and Making Plans dimension has more importance in Lebanon due to increased religious attachment as well as the wide mixture of religions, which have history together in Lebanon. Many schools in Lebanon teach one religion to their students, while others prefer to keep it out of their curriculum altogether in order to avoid religion-based problems. Only a handful of schools claim to teach spiritual courses, which involve many religions side by side. Therefore, when teaching the skills in this subcategory, one has to be careful and free from personal religious bias.
- **Being with a Significant Other:** This subcategory of the Looking Forward and Making Plans dimension is somewhat different from foreign countries since, in Lebanon, civil marriage is still under debate and most people willing to get a civil marriage need to travel abroad to do it. As for

those who want to get married in Lebanon, the only option available is religious marriage requiring its own skills in planning and execution. Additionally, living together without marriage in Lebanon is illegal, which is something that is widely acceptable in most advanced countries. As for the other subcategories, they can be wholly adopted from any foreign life skills curricula with no to very minor changes. This is due to the fact that the skills included in the following subcategories are universal and widely applicable anywhere in the world:

- All the subcategories of Self Care and Hygiene
- General Social Skills
- Activities with Friends
- Healthy Work Relationships
- Walking or Using Personal Vehicles
- All the subcategories of Career and Money Management
- Improving Lifestyles
- Planning and Thinking Ahead.

Research Question 3:

At what point in their lives should Lebanese individuals with special needs be placed under a life skills curriculum?

As was discussed in the literature review, most schools in advanced countries include life skills education from an early age interwoven with regular school curricula. In Lebanon, this life skills education is usually undertaken by the parents of the child; the matter that makes it haphazard and without any particular order for the skills taught. Moreover, in the US, UK, Europe, and Australia, when individuals with special needs graduate from school, they go

through intensive life skills education in the special needs communities that were also discussed in this literature review.

Since no residential special needs communities exist or are fully equipped in Lebanon, a life skills program based on the skills listed in this chapter can be implemented in schools alongside regular curricula, and it can be made more intensive as students go into secondary school. In this way, when students with special needs graduate from schools, they are directly able to enter the low skill workforce and can become more productive in the community. As for adults with special needs who have already graduated from school and were never taught life skills, special afternoon programs can be established for them within different schools for special needs individuals.

In conclusion, life skills education for special needs individuals in Lebanon can start at any age. However, the sooner it is tackled, the better and easier it becomes for these individuals to acquire the skills and become part of the productive workforce. This can be done by teaching the skills outlined in this chapter. Of course, each of these skills can be broken down into its core components which can be taught separately according to an individual's capabilities and needs.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main goal behind this study was to find out what life skills are needed for individuals with special needs in Lebanon in order to improve their livelihood and make them more productive members of the community; contrary to what they are considered today, which is as a burden to society. According to all national and international agreements and policies signed by the Lebanese government, there is general consent regarding the inclusion of individuals with special needs in Lebanese schools and in the community in general. Moreover, there are laws which were included throughout the study indicating the mandatory employment of individuals with special needs. However, these laws are mostly neglected due to the lack of government follow up and availability of support for individuals with special needs.

Even though life skills curricula have existed in more advanced countries for a while now, the main problem was that Lebanon, as a third world country as well as an Arab country employs life skills different from those employed elsewhere. In order to find out what can and cannot be applied from foreign curricula, I interviewed 24 low skill workers in Lebanon regarding the life skills they employ in their everyday lives. From these interviews, we extracted all the life skills, eliminated the doubles, and then separated them into the 5 life skills dimensions described in the literature review. Later on, I separated the skills in each category into the subcategories specified in Table 7 in the Methodology chapter.

After the interviews were conducted and the life skills were extracted and organized, I created a list of over 250 life skills divided into 5 dimensions and 25 subcategories. These life skills cover all of life's dimensions and areas from personal care to housing to work, etc... Moreover, I divided later on the subcategories into those which can be adopted or adapted in Lebanon as they are from foreign curricula, can be partially adapted, and can neither be adapted

nor adopted, but need to be created anew to fit a Lebanese context. Additionally, I discussed how schools in more advanced parts of the world start life skills education for special needs individuals early on in school years while, in Lebanon, it's not even tackled in mainstream education, but it is the responsibility of the parents. However, with the list of skills, which was made available through this study, the possibility of integrating life skills programs for students with special needs within a school environment becomes possible as well as the option of creating life skills programs for adults with special needs.

The applications of this list of life skills are many and widely varied. It can be wholly used as a basis for a special needs life skills program or parts of it can be taken and taught separately. Moreover, these skills can be interwoven in the regular education curriculum without really requiring any extra time. More details regarding the uses of this list of life skills are included here:

- The list can be adapted as a basis for a life skills program's curriculum: This can be done by creating an apartment-like setting for the students equipped with bathrooms and laundry rooms with access to the wider community. In this setting, the students will be taught how to apply the various life skills. The skills themselves can be broken into their basic components or mixed together depending on a student's capabilities and challenges.
- Some of the skills or categories as a whole may be taught separately: Depending on an individual's needs and weaknesses, some skills or categories may be taught in isolation. If a person is already able to take care of himself and can help around the house, but needs to get a job, the dimension of Career and Money Management may be worked on by itself without having to teach anything related to the other skills. Usually, before teaching these skills to any students, it is recommended to assess them in each of the skills in order to determine a student's

level of mastery of each. Any skill that the student already knows by applying it in front of the assessor can be eliminated from the list while other skills which need more work or need to be taught from the ground up can be tackled after the assessment.

- The skills can be interwoven in a regular education curriculum: Most of the life skills uncovered in this study, except some of those related to the Housing and Commutation dimension, can be incorporated into a regular school curriculum without requiring extra time. For example, building a CV can be included in English classes, some of the money management skills can be included in math and economy classes, health and hygiene can be included in biology classes, etc... Even though some of these skills are included in some of the classes, teachers lack the necessary resources or training to teach them as life skills. Most teachers teach these skills as knowledge and facts instead of actual skills.

- The list can be used to start a community for individuals with special needs in Lebanon: Based on these skills, a community dedicated for individuals with special needs can be started in Lebanon. The skills can be used as a basis for their educational programs as well as a basis for the plan upon which the community can be built. From them, we can find out what resources are needed and create facilities within the community which enable the teaching of these skills.

Unfortunately, one of the limitations encountered in this study was that I could not tackle the topic of skills related to sexual education with the interviewees. This was due to the fact that, in Lebanon, this topic is still considered as a form of social taboo, which should not be discussed in public. Moreover, as an interviewer, I could not bring up this topic with the interviewees for 2 main reasons. The first reason is that in most cases, bringing up the topic of sex with individuals might render them uncomfortable and less willing to participate in the study. The second reason is that, among the low skill workers in Lebanon, except those who are attending university but

working in low skill jobs to pay their tuition, there is little or no awareness regarding the dangers of unprotected sexual encounters. Therefore, I tried to find links related to sexual education within the conducted interviews but no connections were found.

Moreover, and because of the previously mentioned limitation, the filter of practicality through which the skills were to be seen through was rendered useless because the only skills which would have been blocked were expected to be mainly related to sexual education. Despite that, even after the elimination of the sexual education subcategory included in the Self Care and Hygiene or the Social Communication and Relationships dimension, all skills were checked for practicality and were deemed practical to be taught and safe to be discussed in a classroom and in any other environment.

However, since the skills, which would be included in a sex education curriculum are more or less universal, a foreign curriculum can be adapted to Lebanese standards. One of the curricula used is the FoSE (Future of Sex Education⁴) curriculum contains objectives that can be tackled in every school grade.

In conclusion, this research was able to answer the research questions it has set about to answer. Even though I was unable to tackle the topic of sex education, the skills which were compiled, in addition to a foreign sexual education curriculum, are sufficient to start on a life skills education program in Lebanon.

⁴ Future of Sex Education Initiative. (2012). National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12 [a special publication of the Journal of School Health]. Retrieved from <http://www.futureofsexeducation.org/documents/josh-fose-standards-web.pdf>

REFERENCES

- Abdul Kader Rakha, R. (2011, February). Website for special education. Beirut, Lebanon: Lebanese American University.
- Aide et Action. (2012). *Identifying barriers to employment of youth with intellectual disabilities in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh: Aide et Action.
- Akar, B. (2007). Citizenship education in Lebanon: an introduction into students' concepts and learning experiences. *Educate* , 7(2), 2 - 18.
- Alias, A. (2013). The issues in implementing transition programs for special needs students. *Asian Social Science* , 9(16), 9 - 14.
- Al-Krenawi, A. (2005). Mental health practice in Arab countries. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* , 18(5), 560 - 564.
- Arc of King County. (2012). *Who we are*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from www.arcofkingcounty.org: <http://www.arcofkingcounty.org/index.php/who-we-are>
- Asquith, S., Clark, C. L., & Waterhouse, L. (2005). *The role of the social worker in the 21st century: a literature review*. Scottish Executive Education Department.
- Azar, M., & Badr, L. K. (2006). The adaptation of mothers of children with intellectual disability in Lebanon. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* , 17 (4), 375 - 380.
- Bahous, R. &. (2008). Improving schools for social justice in Lebanon. *Improving Schools* , 11(2), 127 - 141.
- Baker, B. L., & Brightman, A. J. (2004). *Steps to independence: teaching everyday skills to children with special needs*. New York: Brookes Publishing Company.
- Bart, P. (2001). Smart from the start: the promise of universal design for learning. *remedial and special education* , 22(4), 197 - 203.

- Beck, A. T., & Alford, B. A. (2009). *Depression: causes and treatment* (2nd ed.). Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Beugelsdijk, S., Koen, C. I., & Noorderhaven, N. G. (2006). Organizational culture and relationship skills. *Organization Studies* , 27(6), 833 - 854.
- Blomquist, K. B. (2006). Health, education, work, and independence of young adults with disabilities. *Orthopaedic Nursing* , 25(3), 168 - 187.
- BouJaoude, S., & Ghaith, G. (2006). Educational reform at a time of change: the case of Lebanon. In J. Earnest, & D. Treagust (Eds.), *Education Reform in Societies in Transition: International Perspectives*, 193 - 210. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Campbell, R. (2003). Technology for inclusion: meeting the special needs of all students. *Journal of Special Education Technology* , 19(2), 63 - 64.
- CASE. (2011). Information on eligibility criteria. In C. A. (CASE), & D. R. California, *Special Education Rights and Responsibilities* (p. Chapter 3). California: CASE and Disability Rights California.
- Cavarfordt, C. L., & Sheridan, M. J. (2007). The role of religion and spirituality in working with children and adolescents. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* , 26(3), 1 - 23.
- CLSA. (2011). *Casey life skills practice guide*. USA: CLSA.
- Cobb, B., & Alwell, M. (2009). Transition planning/coordinating interventions for youth with disabilities: A Systematic Review. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals* , 32(2), 70 - 81.
- Crawford, C. (2011). *The Employment of people with intellectual disabilities in Canada: a statistical profile*. Toronto: Institute for Research on Inclusion and Society (IRIS).

- Cronin, M., & Patton, J. (2001). *Life skills instruction for all students with special needs*. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.
- Curtis, V., Schmidt, W., Luby, S., Florez, R., Toure, O., & Biran, A. (2011). Hygiene: new hopes, new horizons. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* , 11(4), 312 - 321.
- Dahlem, K. A. (2012). *Financial and future planning for siblings with special needs and disabilities*. Madison: University of Wisconsin - Madison: Center for Financial Security.
- Dereka, M. (2004). Life skills for young adults with learning disabilities. *Tizard Learning Disability Review* , 9(3), 14 - 20.
- Ditterline, J., Banner, D., Oakland, T., & Becton, D. (2008). Adaptive behavior profiles of students with disabilities. *Journal of Applied School Psychology* , 24(2), 191 - 208.
- Dover, W. (2005). *The inclusion facilitator*. Manhattan: The MASTER Teacher, Inc.
- Eastwood College. (2013). *EWC profile*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from Eastwood College: <http://www.eastwoodcollege.com/Media/Pdf/EWC%20profile.pdf>
- Ee, J., & Soh, K. C. (2005). Teacher perceptions on what a functional curriculum should be for children with special needs. *The International Journal of Special Education* , 20(2), 6 - 18.
- El-Fadel, M., Zeinati, M., & Jamali, D. (2000). Water resources in Lebanon: characterization, water balance and constraints. *International Journal of Water Resources Development* , 16(4), 615 - 638.
- ElZein, H. L. (2009). Attitudes toward inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools (A case study from parents' perspective). *Educational Research and Reviews* , 4(4), 164 - 172.

- Ferguson, H., Myles, B. S., & Hagiwara, T. (2005). Using a personal digital assistant to enhance the independence of an adolescent with asperger syndrome. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities* , 40(1), 60 - 67.
- Filippatou, D., & Kaldi, S. (2010). The effectiveness of project-based learning on pupils with learning difficulties regarding academic performance, group work and motivation. *International Journal of Special Education* , 25(1), 17 - 26.
- Fleming-Farrell, N. (2013, April 5). Special needs children lack support. *The Daily Star*, 4.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Frankel, E. B. (2004). Supporting inclusive care and education for young children with special needs and their families an international perspective. *Childhood Education* , 80(6), 210 - 316.
- Frost, N., Robinson, M., & Anning, A. (2005). Social workers in multidisciplinary teams: issues and dilemmas for professional practice. *Child & Family Social Work* , 10(3), 187 - 196.
- Geller, L. L., & Greenberg, M. (2009). Managing the transition process from high school to college and beyond: challenges for individuals, families, and society. *Social Work in Mental Health* , 8(1), 92 - 116.
- Glassman, P., & Subar, P. (2008). Improving and maintaining oral health for people with special needs. *Dental Clinics of North America* , 52(2), 447 - 461.
- Graungaard, A. H., & Skov, L. (2006). Why do we need a diagnosis? A qualitative study of parents' experiences, coping and needs, when the newborn child is severely disabled. *Child: Care, Health and Development* , 33(3), 296 - 307.
- Hansen, R. (2003). *BC life skills program organizer*. British Columbia: Man in Motion Foundation.

- Hatoum, R. J. (2010). *Educating children with down syndrome in Lebanon*. Florida: Florida State University.
- Heller, T., Caldwell, J., & Hasazi, S. (2006). Supporting aging caregivers and adults with developmental disabilities in future planning. *Mental Retardation* , 44(3), 189 - 202.
- Hodge, N., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2008). Problematizing parent-professional partnerships in education. *Disability and Society* , 23(6), 637 - 647.
- Hodkinson, A., & Vickerman, P. (2009). *Key issues in special educational needs and inclusion*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Horne, P. E., & Timmons, V. (2009). Making it work: teachers' perspectives on inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* , 13(3), 273 - 286.
- Huang, H. -M. (2002). Toward constructivism for adult learners in online learning environments. *British Journal of Educational Technology* , 33(1), 27 - 37.
- Hughes, C. (2001). Transition to adulthood: supporting young adults to access social, employment, and civic pursuits. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews* , 7 (2), 84 - 90.
- Job Accommodation Network. (2013, March 7). *Accommodation and compliance series: intellectual or cognitive impairments*. Retrieved June 25, 2014, from www.askjan.org: <http://askjan.org/media/downloads/IntellorCogA&CSeries.pdf>
- Kalyva, E., & Avramidis, E. (2005). Improving communication between children with autism and their peers through the 'circle of friends': a small-scale intervention study. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* , 18 (3), 253 - 261.

- Kazarian, S. S. (2005). Family functioning, cultural orientation, and psychological well-being among university students in Lebanon. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 145 (2), 141 - 154.
- Kelly, K., & Ramundo, P. (2006). *You mean I'm not lazy, stupid or crazy?!: the classic self-help book for adults with attention deficit disorder*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Khochen, M., & Radford, J. (2012). Attitudes of teachers and headteachers towards inclusion in Lebanon. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(2), 139 - 153.
- Khoury, B. (2013). *Reproductive health and sexuality in Arab youth*. Retrieved June 19, 2014, from <http://scholar.uwindsor.ca>:
http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=arabyouthsymp&seiredir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fscholar.google.com%2Fscholar%3Fstart%3D10%26q%3D%2522sexual%2Beducation%2522%2Blebanon%26hl%3Den%26as_sdt%3D0%2C5%26as_ylo%3D2005%26as_yhi%3
- King, G. A., Baldwin, P. J., Currie, M., & Evans, J. (2005). Planning successful transitions from school to adult roles for youth with disabilities. *Children's Health Care*, 34(3), 193 - 216.
- Kirby, A., Edwards, L., & Sugden, D. (2011). Emerging adulthood in developmental coordination disorder: parent and young adult perspectives. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 32(4), 1351 - 1360.
- Kirby, J. R., Silvestri, R., Allingham, B. H., Parrila, R., & La Fave, C. B. (2008). Learning strategies and study approaches of postsecondary students with dyslexia. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 41(1), 85 - 96.
- Kronfol, N. M. (2012). Health services to groups with special needs in the Arab world: a review. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 18(12), 1247 - 1253.

- Kuiper, E., Volman, M., & Terwel, J. (2005). The web as an information resource in K-12 education: strategies for supporting students in searching and processing information. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 285 - 328.
- Lambs Farm. (2013). *Mission and programs*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from www.lambsfarm.org: <http://www.lambsfarm.org/mission-programs/>
- Landa, R. J. (2005). Assessment of social communication skills in preschoolers. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, 11(3), 247 - 252.
- Landry, S. H., Smith, K. E., & Swank, P. R. (2006). Responsive parenting: establishing early foundations for social, communication, and independent problem-solving skills. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(4), 627 - 642.
- Locke, J., Ishijima, E. H., Kasari, C., & London, N. (2010). Loneliness, friendship quality and the social networks of adolescents with high-functioning autism in an inclusive school setting. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 10(2), 74 - 81.
- Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2012). *Intercultural competence: interpersonal communication across cultures* (7th ed.). New York: Pearson.
- Mannix, D. (2009). *Life skills activities for special children*. San Francisco: Jossey - Bass.
- Mazurek, K., & Winzer, M. (2010). Legislation, policy, and the inclusion of students with special needs: national glimpses. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 1 - 17.
- McLeod, S., & McKinnon, D. H. (2007). Prevalence of communication disorders compared with other learning needs in 14 500 primary and secondary school students. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 42(1), 37 - 59.
- Metzler, I. (2006). *Disability in medieval Europe: thinking about physical impairment during the high Middle Ages, c. 1100 - 1400*. Oxon: Routledge.

- Miller, S. M., & Chan, F. (2008). Predictors of life satisfaction in individuals with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* , 52(12), 1039 - 1047.
- Mosby. (2009). *Mosby's medical dictionary*. USA: Elsevier.
- Murphy, N. A., & Carbone, P. S. (2008). Promoting the participation of children with disabilities in sports, recreation, and physical activities. *American Academy of Pediatrics* , 121(5), 1057 -1061.
- Naidoo, A. (2011, June 5). *Special needs people can thrive in UAE workforce*. Retrieved June 24, 2014, from Gulf News: <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/education/special-needs-people-can-thrive-in-uae-workforce-1.817356>
- Nasreddine, L., Hwalla, N., Sibai, A., Hamze, M., & Parent-Massin, D. (2006). Food consumption patterns in an adult urban population in Beirut, Lebanon. *Public Health Nutrition* , 9(2), 194 - 203.
- Nilholm, C. (2006). Special education, inclusion and democracy. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* , 21(4), 431 - 445.
- Nordness, P. D., Haverkost, A., & Volberding, A. (2011). An examination of hand-held computer-assisted instruction on subtraction skills for second grade students with learning and behavioral disabilities. *Journal of Special Education Technology* , 26(4), 15 - 24.
- Nova Scotia, E. (2011). *Life skills: supporting student success*. Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia Education.
- Osgood, R. (2005). *The history of inclusion in the United States*. USA: Gallaudet University Press.

- Peters, S. J. (2009). *Review of marginalisation of people with disabilities in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan*. Michigan: Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010.
- Pijl, S. J., Frostad, P., & Flem, A. (2008). The social position of pupils with special needs in regular schools. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* , 52(4), 387 - 405.
- Poulou, M., & Norwich, B. (2002). Cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses to students with emotional and behavioural difficulties: a model of decision-making. *British Educational Research Journal* , 28(1), 111 - 138.
- Ralabate, P., & Foley, B. (2003, May). *IDEA And NCLB: Intersection of access and outcomes*. Retrieved June 16, 2014, from National Education Association:
<http://www.nea.org/home/18617.htm>
- Reisberg, L. (1998). Facilitating inclusion with integrated curriculum: a multidisciplinary approach. *Intervention in School and Clinic* , 33(5), 272.
- Robinson, D., & Porporino, F. J. (2004). Programming in cognitive skills: the reasoning and rehabilitation programme. In C. R. Hollin (Ed.), *The Essential Handbook of Offender Assessment and Treatment* (pp. 63 - 78). West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Rohleder, P. (2009). Providing sex education to persons with learning disabilities in the era of HIV/AIDS. *Journal of Health Psychology* , 14(4), 601 - 610.
- Rotatori, A. F., Obiakor, E. F., & Jeffrey, B. P. (Eds.). (2011). *History of special education* (Vol. 21). WA: Emerald Books.
- Salem, A. A. (2013). The impact of teaching academic education course of children with special needs in the ordinary schools on students' attitudes toward Inclusion of disabled children. *Journal of Education and Learning* , 2(2), 112 - 125.

- Sanders, K. Y. (2006). Overprotection and lowered expectations of persons with disabilities: the unforeseen consequences. *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation* , 27(2), 181 - 188.
- Schooler, D., Ward, M., Merriwether, A., & Caruthers, A. (2005). Cycles of shame: menstrual shame, body shame, and sexual decision-making. *The Journal of Sex Research* , 42(4), 324 - 334.
- Schram, P. J., & Morash, M. (2002). Evaluation of a life skills program for women inmates in Michigan. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* , 34(4), 47 - 70.
- Silverman, D. (2011). Introducing qualitative research. In D. Silverman, & D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research* (3rd ed., 3 - 12). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Sinclair, M. (2007). *Education in emergencies*. Retrieved June 17, 2014, from www.cedol.org: <http://www.cedol.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/52-56-2007.pdf>
- Sitlington, P. L., Clark, G. M., & Kolstoe, O. P. (2000). *Transition education and services for adolescents with disabilities*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Skiba, R. J., Simmons, A. B., Ritter, S., Gibb, A. C., Rausch, K., & Cuadrado, J. (2011). Achieving equity in special education: history, status, and current challenges. *Exceptional Children* , 74(3), 264 - 288.
- Solish, A., Perry, A., & Minnes, P. (2010). Participation of children with and without disabilities in social, recreational and leisure activities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* , 23(3), 226 - 236.
- Steele, M. M. (2005, April 30). *Teaching students with learning disabilities: constructivism or behaviorism?* Retrieved June 19, 2014, from Current Issues in Education Volume 8 Number 10: <http://cie.asu.edu/volume8/number10/>

- Tantam, D. (2012). *Austism spectrum disorders through the life span*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., Wood, W. M., Brewer, D. M., & Eddy, S. (2005). A conceptual framework of self-advocacy for students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education* , 26(1), 43 - 54.
- Tomlinson, S. (2012). *A sociology of special education*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Trejo, C. (2008). The impact of inclusion programs on the academic achievement on non-disabled learners in selected Texas elementary schools. Stephenville, Texas, USA: Taleton State University.
- Trimble, M. R. (2007). Chapter seven: neurotheology I. In M. R. Trimble, *The soul in the brain: the cerebral basis of language, art and belief* (pp. 133 - 158). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- UNESCO. (1999). The first national conference on the education of persons with special needs in Lebanon. *The First National Conference on the Education of Persons with Special Needs in Lebanon* (pp. 1-19). Beirut: UNESCO.
- UNICEF. (2005). *Life skills-based education in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF.
- Universal Periodic Review. (2013, November 22). *Lebanon mid-term implementation assessment*. Retrieved June 22, 2014, from UPR Info: <http://www.upr-info.org/followup/assessments/session23/lebanon/MIA-Lebanon.pdf>
- Vakil, S., Welton, E., O'Connor, B., & Kline, L. S. (2009). Inclusion means everyone! the role of the early childhood educator when including young children with autism in the classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal* , 36(4), 321 - 326.

- Viswanathan, M., Rosa, J. A., & Harris, J. E. (2005). Decision making and coping of functionally illiterate consumers and some implications for marketing management. *Journal of Marketing*, 69(1), 15 - 31.
- Wehbi, S. (2008). *Teaching international social work*. Ottawa: Canadian Assn for Social Work Education.
- Wehbi, S. (2006). The challenges of inclusive education in Lebanon. *Disability and Society*, 21(4), 331 - 343.
- Wehbi, S., & El-Lahib, Y. (2007). Organizing for voting rights of people with disabilities in Lebanon. *Equal Opportunities International*, 449-464.
- Wehbi, S., & El-Lahib, Y. (2008, Spring). *Sit (or stand) and be counted! campaigning for the voting rights of people with disabilities in Lebanon*. Retrieved June 22, 2014, from Disability Studies Quarterly: <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/98/98>
- Wehby, J. H., Lane, K. L., & Falk, K. B. (2003). Academic instruction for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 11(4), 194 - 197.
- Wendt, J. A. (2011). *The art of God*. Lulu: self-published.
- Westwood, P. (2007). *Commonsense methods for children with special educational needs* (5th ed.). Oxon: Routledge.
- Young, D. R., Phillips, J. A., Yu, T., & Haythornthwaite, J. A. (2006). Effects of a life skills intervention for increasing physical activity in adolescent girls. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 160(12), 1255 - 1261.
- Ysseldyke, J. E., & Burns, M. K. (2008). Reported prevalence of evidence-based instructional practices in special education. *The Journal of Special Education*, 43(1), 3 - 11.

Zhang, D., & Rusch, F. R. (2005). The role of spirituality in living with disabilities. *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* , 9(1), 83 - 98.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Name (to be replaced by pseudonym):

Age:

Gender:

Introduction:

Family status:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

- 1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?
- 2- What is your daily routine?
- 3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?
- 4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?
- 5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?
- 6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?
- 7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?
- 8- How did you get to make your friends?
- 9- How's your relationship with your family?
- 10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?
- 11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?
- 12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?
- 13- How did you get your current job?
- 14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?
- 15- Do you use the bank? How?
- 16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?
- 17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

Appendix B

Interview Answers

Interview 1

Pseudonym: *Abdo Amin*

Age: 32

Gender: *Male*

Family status: Married +2 kids

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

- 1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

Concierge. I have been working in this building for five years now. Before, I used to do security at a company in Beirut.

- 2- What is your daily routine?

Wake up, shower, wait till they [the people who live in the building] call and want something like bringing groceries, calling water delivery guy, preparing and cleaning cars, mopping the stairs and entrance twice a week, sweeping the garage and entrance every day, watering the plants when they need, turning on the generator...

- 3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's much better than working in Syria, especially with the war now.

- 4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

You need to stay clean and try not to smell sweaty because the apartment owners don't like it when you smell and look at you in a strange way. So you need to choose and use deodorant too. You need to keep your hair tidy. You need to change your clothes if they get too dirty during the day.

- 5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

Thank God no. I am fine. With all the work I have to do, I barely have time to eat on some days. This helps me stay slim. If I am sick, I ask the pharmacist for medicine and it usually works. If I am very sick, and it only happened once when I was in Beirut, I go see a doctor.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

Usually, especially in the afternoons, my friends come over and we drink Matte. Sometimes we watch TV and sometimes we play cards.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Muslim but don't pray much. I do fast during Ramadan though.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

Atef is the one who set up this job for me. I know him from Syria. The others are the concierges of the nearby buildings or work as waiters in the restaurant up the street.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's great. We live in a small apartment in this building. The children go to Azarieh [a charity school nearby] and everything is good, thank God.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I just have to renew my residency papers every year. The owner of the building takes care of insurance and comes with me when I need to renew my residency.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

My wife usually takes care of the house and the kids. She also buys groceries. I only go with her when she wants to buy something heavy like gas. Also, when something is broken in the house, I have to replace or repair it.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

When I want to go somewhere, I usually go up the street and take a bus or a service [low fare cabs]. You need to know the roads because many drivers take shortcuts and, if you don't know the roads, you get lost. Also, you need to know the regular fares for buses and service.

Sometimes, if a service sees that you are in a hurry or when he's not going where you want to go but is willing to take a detour for you, he asks for double fare. You have to know how and when to bargain with them.

13- How did you get your current job?

Atef had just gotten his job here and he knew that they needed a concierge for this building so he told them about me. They called me and offered me more than my previous security job so I accepted. They also allowed me to bring my family to live with me.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Thank God it's good. My family and I are able to make do and save some money. My kids are in school. Sometimes, some of the apartment owners are upset and take it out on me, but I have to take it in and keep quiet. When something is wrong, I usually talk with the owner of the building and we try to solve it, like when some of the kids ruined the plants by the entrance when they were playing football. I told him and he told me that I could ask them to play somewhere else.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No. You need to have a good income to put in the bank. Most of the money we save, we send to our parents back in Syria. They need it with the war. It's bad.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am patient and healthy. My weakness ... I don't know.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

Now I work for my kids. I need to make sure they grow up healthy and have a good education so that they don't have to be concierges like me. The work is good, but I know they can be more if they get educated.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I don't talk politics. But I know it's not very good in Lebanon. I don't know what would be able to change it. In Syria, we have Bashar [the president], here, you don't have him.

Interview 2

Pseudonym: Abed Fleihan

Age: 48

Gender: male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your

participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I have been the gardener here for the past twenty-five years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I wake up, prepare myself, take a morning walk in the gardens to see if anything needs urgent attention and fix them, sweep the lanes, water the plants, pick the ripe fruits, have lunch, sleep a bit, pick some flowers for the mistress, spray pesticides if needed, trim plants which are growing too big, have an evening walk to make sure everything is where it should be, then I have dinner and go to bed.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's ok. I never worked anywhere else to know. When my father passed away over thirty years ago, the master took me in. I was never good at school but I was good with plants. So they asked me to take over gardening when their old gardener passed away and I've been here ever since.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I shower and shave almost every day. I wear my work clothes on top of my usual clothes unless it was too hot. I need to brush my teeth at least twice a day when I can. Though as you can see, I barely have any teeth left.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

A bit of cholesterol and high blood pressure, but it's not serious. I take the medication the doctor gives me and try to watch what I eat.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We just watch TV and chat when we have time.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

On paper, I am Muslim. But I don't really practice my religion much. I think that God is one and that's it. People like to complicate things.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

They work here as well. I usually hang out with the cook and the drivers. Sometimes, the maids join us when they have time.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My parents passed away and my older brother has been gone since before then. No one knows where he went. My only family are the master and the mistress here. They are great people.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

The master's people take care of all that. I don't do any of it.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I just have to keep my room clean. The maids take care of everything else.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

Usually, the master allows one of the drivers to use the car on their days off. If we both have the same day off, which is usually on Monday, we go out in the car. I don't drive. If we can't use the car, we sometimes call a cab or take the bus. When we go with the driver, I don't think I need to know anything. For the cab or the bus, we need to know how much they usually get paid.

Usually, it's much cheaper to use the bus. But sometimes, buses don't go where we want to go, so we have to call a taxi and know how much to pay him.

13- How did you get your current job?

[not asked]

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It's great here. The master usually checks up on me and we work on things that need solutions.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

I do. I didn't want to at first but my master insisted. He wants me to save some money in case his children don't want me after he passes away, may God grant him a long life! I usually go once a month after I get paid and put a part of my salary there. Sometimes they give me cards and I have to sign that I received them and that's it. I never used them.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I'm good with plants. I know what they need and what makes them grow. My weakness is that I never learned to use technology. I'm an old fashioned guy.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I hope to get married and get a family some day. I'm saving money in the bank to be able to do that. But I haven't found a woman yet. Maximum, I'll just use the money I saved for my retirement.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

My master is very involved in politics. He talks about it often and I hear bits and pieces of it. However, I don't really talk much about it because they're all liars.

Interview 3

Pseudonym: Adel Mehio

Age: 34

Gender: male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I drive a school bus. It's my third year.

2- What is your daily routine?

It varies. But usually, on weekdays, I pick the kids up in the morning and drop them off in the afternoon. Sometimes, they send me to pick stuff up from suppliers and sometimes they ask me to take kids and teachers on trips. Every day is different. Sometimes I sit and do nothing all day and sometimes, I don't have time to eat because there are so many trips.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's bad. You work a lot and get very tired but they pay nothing.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

Usually, I shower and brush my teeth in the morning. I also make a sandwich to bring with me to work. I also have to check the gas tank and fill it when it's almost empty before I go on my morning round.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

My health is good. No matter what I eat, I don't gain much weight and then I quickly lose it. I don't think much about my health. If I feel very sick, I go see a doctor. Otherwise, I don't like to see doctors because they create something wrong even when you are well.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We usually play card, watch TV and smoke shisha after work.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Shiite and go to the mosque every Friday to pray. I also fast all of Ramadan.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

I've known most of them since I was a kid. We grew up together in the same neighborhood.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

We're good as long as we don't live in the same house. I rented a small studio in a close neighborhood so that I can have my own place.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I have to pay the municipality taxes as well as water and electricity. I don't have daman. The municipality tax and water I usually pay them at the municipality. As for the electricity, the collector passes by and leaves a note, so I leave the money with the shop owner downstairs.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

It's pretty messy. I try to tidy it up every now and then but it gets messed up a few hours later. I also have to clean the bathroom once a week and do the dishes. Otherwise, I have nothing to eat with.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have a small car. I need to know how to drive and when it breaks down, I have to know what's wrong so that the mechanic doesn't swindle me.

13- How did you get your current job?

I found an ad in Alwaseet and called them. The guy in charge interviewed me and gave me the job.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

The pay is not that good, but at least I have a job. I can afford my gas and my rent but have nothing left by the end of the month. I haven't paid the debt I owe the shop downstairs for two months now because my car broke down and I had to buy a new part which cost me a fortune.

When I'm not satisfied, I just shut up and let it go. Lots of people without a job and I am easily replaceable.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Yes, I pay my car loan every month.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am a friendly guy and I have a lot of friends. My weakness would be that I am impatient and have a quick temper sometimes.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I applied for a few jobs in Dubai and am waiting for them to call me. I can't really do anything else at the moment.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I support the Hezeb. They helped me out when I was in a bit of trouble.

Interview 4

Pseudonym: Anna Garrido

Age: 25

Gender: Female

Family status: engaged

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I have been working for Madam for a year now. Before, I worked at another house.

2- What is your daily routine?

I wake up before the children, prepare their breakfast and food for school then I wake them up and help them get dressed, brush their teeth and get ready for school. Then, I wait with them for the bus. When they go, I shower and have breakfast then clean the house. Sometimes, madam has

guests so I prepare coffee for them and work in the kitchen or the bedrooms until they leave. After that, I finish cleaning the house and sometimes go get things from the supermarket with madam. I help with lunch then eat and have a break till the kids come back from school. I wait for them at the bottom of the building then help them eat. I do the dishes then go sleep until time for dinner, unless madam has guests. After that, I have dinner, wait for everyone to finish eating before I clean the kitchen then go shower, clean bathroom and sleep.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

Too much work but it's ok. It's better than Philippines because work there is too cheap.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I wake up, get dressed and brush teeth before doing breakfast.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. I am vegetarian, which is more healthy.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

The agency prepares trips for us sometimes. I like going on trips to see Lebanon with my friends. It's different than with madam and the kids.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I go to church on Sundays with madam.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

I met Bungie who works in first floor. I became friends with her and she introduced me to others. We became friends.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

I call them every week and send them money every month.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I went with madam to do the residency papers.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I keep my room clean and tidy. I usually take care of it at night before I shower.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

When we go on trips we use the bus that the agency reserves for us. If they don't organize a trip, some of my friends and I take a taxi and go to places. To use it, one of us calls the number of the

taxi company and ask them how much it costs to go from our building to the place. If we like the price, we tell them to come and divide the money between whoever is going on the trip.

13- How did you get your current job?

I applied at an agency in the Philippines, they called me and brought me here.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes, I love the kids and they love me. If something is wrong, I try to fix it. I don't tell madam unless it's very bad.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No, I only use a money transfer company to send money to my family.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very quick with work. But sometimes, I forget to do things.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I will work here for ten years and collect money to go back and get married. My fiancée bought the house and I send him money to help pay for it.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I don't know. I hear it's not good.

Interview 5

Pseudonym: Atef Said

Age: 45

Gender: male

Family status: engaged

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I am a concierge for almost seven years now.

2- What is your daily routine?

There's only one occupied apartment in this building so nothing much to do. I wake up in the morning, make and have breakfast and a cup of coffee then get dressed and go for my morning round around the building. Then, I sit at the front porch and chat with the passersby unless the occupants want me to do something for them. Then I make my lunch and eat. In the afternoon, I get together with Abdo and the others and we hang out. Sometimes, we have dinner together then I come back and go to bed.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

Better than work in Syria.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

When I wake up, I set the alarm for the next day because I need to be up at half past six in the weekdays and eight during weekends. I prepare breakfast then I get dressed. Sometimes I shave. That's it before I leave my room.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. I only go to the doctor when I feel pain.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We just like to sit around and chat or watch TV. Sometimes we play card but I don't like it much.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Muslim but I only fast during Ramadan.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

I know Abdo from Syria. The others also work in the area.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My family chose my fiancée for me. I am working to save enough money to bring them all from Syria.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I just do my residency papers. When it's time to renew it, I go with my employer. He takes my old residency and my ID. He already has the rest of the papers we need. He submits them and I go pick it up a few weeks later.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I just keep it clean. It's small enough that I clean it up once a week and it stays clean the rest of the week. I sometimes have to clean the bathroom twice a week though. I usually only shower and sleep there so it doesn't get really messy. Also, it's too small for my friends to come over, we usually meet up in other buildings.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have a motorcycle. I use it to go around the area. I need to know how to drive it and to fill it when it's almost empty. For longer journeys, I take a taxi. I need to know how much it should cost because the farther you go, the more you have to pay.

13- How did you get your current job?

My cousin used to work here. When he went back to Syria to get married, he asked me to replace him.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Sometimes I get bored, but it's ok. The owner pays me on time and I never had trouble with him or the occupants.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very friendly. My weakness is that when people talk quickly, sometimes I don't understand them because my first language is Kurdish.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I plan to bring my family to live somewhere in Lebanon and to marry my fiancée. That's why I'm saving enough money to bring them and rent a place for them, maybe in the building where I work if the owner would lower the rent a bit for me. I'm going to ask him soon.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

It's all affected by what's happening in Syria. When things in Syria calm down, Lebanon will follow.

Interview 6

Pseudonym: Bob Zaiter

Age: 30

Gender: Male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I have been a waiter for five years now.

2- What is your daily routine?

I get to work at ten or at five depending on my shift, check with the manager to give me my tasks for the day before the guests start coming in. Sometimes I have to fold and arrange napkins, other times I have to clean tables or sweep. Then, when guests start to come, each of the waiters is responsible for a number of tables. We have to take guest order, bring the food to the tables and clean up after they leave. If I have a morning shift, I leave as soon as the next shift arrives. If I have a night shift, we have to clean up before we leave.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

If I ever have the chance, I would leave and never come back.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I have to brush my teeth, shower, put on deodorant, comb my hair and put on hair gel. I also have to shave every day. My appearance has to always be good.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

I'm still young and healthy. I go to the gym often.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We sometimes go to the gym together or go for road trips around the country. Sometimes in the summer we go to the beach or we go camping. During the winter, we sometimes go to the snow or meet up at someone's place and just chill with some shisha.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Muslim but don't really care much about it. Many of my friends are Christian too. We all don't care much about religion.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

We've been in the same school and neighborhood since we were kids.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's ok I guess. I still live with them because I can't afford an apartment on my own.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

Nothing much. The Mokhtar prepares the papers I need for work and I pay him. If I go to make them myself, it would cost me more gas.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

None. My mom takes care of everything and sometimes I pitch in with the income.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

My friends and I use our cars. Sometimes, we carpool. I just need to know how to drive and I am a good driver.

13- How did you get your current job?

I filled an application form and they called me.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It doesn't pay much, but I hope I will get a promotion this year. When I have trouble with another waiter or something, I talk it out with the manager when I calm down. Sometimes I might shout, but not in front of guests.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Why would I? I don't have anything left by the end of the month.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I have a great sense of humor, but I get angry quickly. I try to control myself.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I am hoping to get a promotion and a salary raise. I also want to buy a new car. To get the promotion, I haven't been absent for the past year. I hope they will see that.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

It rarely changes and, when it does, it becomes worse.

Interview 7

Pseudonym: Carol Dasilva

Age: 38

Gender: female

Family status: married with three kids

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I clean in different houses. I have been doing this for more than fifteen years.

2- What is your daily routine?

Everyday is different. Sometimes I have one house for the whole day, sometimes I work for an hour in each house. I make sure to have a break for lunch and I try to sleep a bit in the afternoon sometimes.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's ok. Each madam is different. Some are very demanding and some are very nice.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I shower and put oil on my hair in the morning to make it shine. Then I get dressed and go to work. I don't eat in the morning because when I work, it makes me tired. I only eat lunch and dinner.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

I had an operation to remove something from my stomach last year because it hurt too much. It still hurts sometimes. I don't take care of my health much.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

On Sundays, they come to my place, we have lunch together and drink alcohol. Many of them sleep over sometimes.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

No.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

We meet in different places like the supermarket.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My parents passed away a few years ago one after the other. Now I work here and send money to my husband and children in Sri Lanka. We built a new building with an apartment for each of my children.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I go with my agent to renew my residency every year. He takes care of things.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I clean it up whenever I can and make sure I always have groceries for when my friends come over. I also have to pay rent, electricity and water.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I walk to most of my work places. Otherwise, I take a taxi. You need to know how to haggle with the taxi driver because they try to take advantage. Sometimes, you also need to hit them if they try to touch you.

13- How did you get your current job?

My agent brought me to Lebanon. At first I only worked for his wife. They didn't need me full time anymore so they allowed me to go work in other places. Some of my friends helped me find some of the houses I work in now.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes. When I am not happy, I stop working for that house and soon get another.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No. I send money to my family and they put in the bank for me.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very clean but some madams find me a bit slow.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I am going to work till I'm forty. Then, I will go live with my family in Sri Lanka and stop all work. That's why I work hard now and my husband saves money.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

It's similar to Sri Lanka. It's the same everywhere.

Interview 8

Pseudonym: Edward Sayah

Age: 50

Gender: male

Family status: married with 5 kids

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I work as a hotel chef. I've been a chef for five years now.

2- What is your daily routine?

I come to work at around nine. Choose what to cook with the head chef then check the pantry. Then, we send a list of missing items to the purchase office to bring them. We make the main meal and prepare the buffet with the waiters. We start receiving guests at around half past noon. While they eat, we check the buffet often to see if we need to refill some trays. We close the buffet at around four and bring everything back to the kitchen for cleaning. At five, we are replaced with the second shift who take care of dinner and breakfast for the next day.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

My wife, my oldest boy and I all work in order to provide for the family. Thankfully, the hotel manager usually allows us to take back home some of the leftovers from the buffet so that saves a lot of money from food.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I shower and shave every morning before breakfast then I put on deodorant to make sure I always smell and look clean. Working with food demands that you stay clean.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

Just the usual things that come with age: some obesity with some cholesterol and triglycerides. I try to watch what I eat to keep them low. I also test them every two months to see if I need any medications.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

I don't have many friends. It's more about relatives who come over or whom we visit. We usually just sit around and chat or watch TV.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am initially a Christian but my wife is Muslim. We raised our kids without any religious instruction. It's not very useful anyway.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

They are relatives.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's very good.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I had to register my kids when they were born. They are all registered in social security with me. When we have medicine, the agent at the hotel submits them for us. I also have to pay electricity, water and municipality taxes since I own the house, which was my parents' house. That's about it.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I do most of the cooking because my wife works at a school. So she and the kids just come home and heat the food. They don't have to cook.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have an old car. I just need to know how to drive it and take it to a mechanic when it sounds or feels wrong.

13- How did you get your current job?

I've been working at the hotel for over twenty years now. At first I was a waiter and then got promoted every few years. I knew the manager back then and he hired me. He quit a few years ago but I stayed.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

The manager is very professional and pays attention to everything. Their pay can be better but it's not that bad. When something is wrong, I resolve it without bothering the manager usually.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Yes, my salary is transferred straight to the bank so I usually use the ATM machine to get my money. I have to memorize my pin code and make sure to ask for a new card when mine expires.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am a quiet and patient person. My weakness is that I only know Arabic. I never learned any other languages. I wish I did because that would've promoted me faster.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

Right now it's all about my kids. I want them to be educated and to have a better chance at life than mine. Thankfully, they all have very good grades in school. My eldest is about to graduate and go to the university. He got a scholarship because of his grades.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

Our leaders are all divided and can't agree on anything except filling their pockets. What else can I say? The only way to change things would be to put them all on a boat and drown them in the middle of the ocean.

Interview 9

Pseudonym: Eliane Taweel

Age: 23

Gender: Female

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I work at a supermarket. It's been almost two years.

2- What is your daily routine?

It depends on the shift. Morning shift is between six AM and two PM, afternoon shift is between two and ten PM. But basically, I restock shelves, assist customers and help at the counter when called. When I help at the counter, I just have to put things in bags.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

I'm applying to jobs in the gulf. I can't wait to get accepted and leave.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I shower, get dressed with the work uniform and then put on makeup. I have breakfast or lunch, depending on the shift, and then take the bus to work.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. When I feel that I gained weight, I go on a diet.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We like to hang out at the mall and sometimes go on road trips.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I don't bother with that.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

I've known them since I was in school.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's ok. We fight sometimes but it all end well eventually.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

My dad takes care of these things.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I have to keep my room neat and clean the bathroom after I use it.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I use the bus often. I need to know when to press the button or shout to make him stop and I need to keep my stuff close so that it doesn't get stolen. I also need to know where to wait and keep my ears open in case the driver decides to change course.

13- How did you get your current job?

My dad knows the owner.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It's ok. It helps pay for my university tuition and it's not too tiring. When I'm not happy, I just skip work. It gets deducted out of my salary but it's ok. I try not to do it often.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Yes. I pay my university tuition there. I don't have a personal account though.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am fun to be around, but I don't like problems. I run away from them instead of facing them. When there is trouble and I have to face it, I just freeze.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I want to graduate and go work abroad. I already submitted my CVs to many companies in the gulf.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I used to be involved in student unions and stuff. But this year is very tough at uni so I stopped. The only thing that I think will help is when we change the whole bunch of politicians that we have.

Interview 10

Pseudonym: Emile Hajj

Age: 21

Gender: male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I have been working as a delivery guy here for less than one year.

2- What is your daily routine?

I usually take the night shift between five in the afternoon and midnight. I get to work and check in. Then, whenever there is a delivery to make, I take the car or the motorcycle depending on the quantity. I make my deliveries, make sure the car and the motorcycle are filled up and locked for the night. I hand in the keys and leave at midnight. That's it.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

As soon as I finish my major, I'm applying abroad.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

If my university classes finish early, I pass by home, shower, fix my hair and take the bus to work. If not, I come straight to work but I make sure I have the deodorant and gel with me. I fix myself at work before my shift starts.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

It's too early to think about these things. I just make sure to get back in shape whenever I feel that I have gained a bit of extra weight.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We hang out at the university cafeteria and sometimes come back to my place and play on the xbox.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I'm Christian. I go to church on Sundays because my parents make me.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

Some of them I've known from school. Most others are with me in the university.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's good. We fight like any family but we're good.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

Nothing that I know of. My dad usually takes care of these things.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I have to keep my room in order, but I usually don't. My mom eventually does it.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

Usually it's the bus or the service [cheap taxi]. Basically, you have to know some of the roads and, if you feel something is odd, ask the driver where he's going or if he's changing course.

13- How did you get your current job?

I sent my CV online and they called me back. I sat for a ten minute interview and was then hired.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes it's good. You can't expect a better salary for a delivery guy. The tips sometimes make up for the little pay though.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

I'm in the habit of putting away at least ten percent of whatever I make in the bank and forget about it. I don't know when I might need it.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I'm a quick delivery guy, and careful too. I haven't been in any accidents since I got my job. But I am not so good with parking. Sometimes, I quickly arrive at the place of the delivery but I can't find a place to park. That's why I usually prefer the motorcycle. You can leave it anywhere.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

Right now, I'm focusing on my studies. I study well and keep my GPA high. When I graduate, I want to start a good career, hopefully abroad, and make a family.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I agree more with the principles and ideas of the Lebanese Forces, but I am not one of them.

Interview 11

Pseudonym: George Ghazarian

Age: 37

Gender: male

Family status: married with one kid

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I've been in the army for seventeen years.

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

121

2- What is your daily routine?

It depends when I have duty. Usually, we wake up for training, get dressed quickly and head to the field. Sometimes we are posted on security checkpoints. Every day is different so there is no set routine.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

We are in service of our country and we love it.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

Basically, you need to be quick with almost everything. They train us to be ready at all times. I need to get dressed, shower and shave everyday.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No, I'm very healthy.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We just sit around and play cards or backgammon.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

No. I am initially Christian but don't practice it.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

We serve together.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

I don't see them often. Because of the duties, I sleep out a lot.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

My family and I are on army insurance, which is good. I usually take the prescriptions and the empty boxes there to get a refund, or to buy them from the army stores. I also just go see the Mokhtar for other papers.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

Nothing since I don't sleep there often. My wife takes care of it.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

It depends on the area where I am serving. Usually, I take the bus. You have to know where to ask him to drop you so that you take another one or a service. Sometimes, you need to change between three buses.

13- How did you get your current job?

I finished school and was recruited almost straight afterwards.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It's a hard job. You are responsible for everyone. And you can't not be satisfied. If you tell that to an officer, he'll tell you to deal with it.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

I get my salary from them bank. That's all I do there. I don't use the machines they have. I go to the teller, give him my card and tell him how much to give me and how much is still left.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very powerful physically. Others usually do what I want. But I have a quick temper.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I will retire at forty or forty-five and go into business with my brother. He has a cab company so maybe I'll drive a cab.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

As soldiers in the army, we can't be with or against anyone. I don't like Lebanese politics anyway.

Interview 12

Pseudonym: George Saghbini

Age: 30

Gender: male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I'm a waiter. I have been working here for four years.

2- What is your daily routine?

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

123

I wake up at around nine in the morning if I have the first shift. If I have the second shift, I sleep till noon. I prepare myself and get to work. There, it depends on the shift. If it's first, we have to clean up before the guests arrive. If it's second shift, we have to lift up the chairs and close down after the customers leave. In between, we wait on tables.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

All I can say is thank God that I have work. I see many people begging on the streets and thank God that I am not like them. Of course, I think it would be much better if I can leave the country, but I don't want to. All my friends and family are here.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I shower when I wake up and prepare breakfast or lunch if there's nothing ready and depending on the shift. Then I brush my teeth and sit with my mom for a few minutes to talk about nothing in particular. Then I walk to work. At work, we have to wash our hands every now and then to make sure they stay clean.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

I have a bit of asthma ever since I was little. I keep my puffer with me just in case.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

Nowadays we get together for the football games if we can. Otherwise, we just sit together at someone's place and smoke shisha while watching tv.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I would like to go to church more often but my work doesn't allow it much.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

It's like a snowball. You meet one person and he introduces you to another and then another. I met some of them at work and they introduced me to their friends and we became friends too.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My mom and I are very close especially since my father died over ten years ago. I'm the only one left to take care of her and she's getting older.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I am registered in daman and my mom is registered with me. I usually take the empty boxes and the prescriptions down to the social security when I have a free day. I also pay the bills and all.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

My mom takes care of it since she's there almost all day long. She retired two years ago and is on pension. It's not much but, between that and my salary, we make do.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I walk to work since it's very close. We still have dad's old car which we use to go to other places. While walking, you need to know how to cross the street and where to walk. It's very chaotic sometimes, but you get used to it.

13- How did you get your current job?

The owner is a relative. When I finished school, I worked in different jobs until he opened it four years ago. That's when he employed me.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes. The owner is my relative and a friend so I can easily talk with him. This makes things a lot simpler.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

I usually get my mom's pension from the bank and also have my own account in which I deposit and save a small amount every month.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am a very caring person. It's probably because I had to take care of my mom since I had no siblings. Also, some people think that this makes me naïve. I don't really care.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I want to get married as soon as I find a girl who would take me. The problem is that I can't leave my mom so she will live with us.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

All are liars and thieves. That's all I can say about them.

Interview 13

Pseudonym: Ghaleb Ammar

Age: 56

Gender: male

Family status: married with 3 kids

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I am a gardener at a greenhouse. I have been working here for around twenty years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I get to work at nine and leave at five. There is no set routine. They tell me what to do and I just do it. I have to water some plants, plant others, fill pots with soil, trim some shrubs, etc...

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

I don't have a choice. I am not educated so I can't go work anywhere else.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I shower and get dressed when the alarm rings. Then I have breakfast and brush my teeth. Sometimes, I get to sit with my kids for a few minutes before the work bus passes by to pick me up.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

I have high blood pressure and cholesterol. I have to take medications daily. I try to watch what I eat too.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

I barely see any friends and, when I do, we just sit around and catch up.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Muslim but my doctor doesn't allow me to fast in Ramadan.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

They're the neighbors. We live in the same building. But I still rarely see them. Everyone's at work most of the time. And when we come back, we are tired and just want to shower and watch TV before bed.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My wife and kids are great. I don't see my kids much because they finish studying and go play with the neighborhood kids. When I see them, we have nothing much to talk about.

- 10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?
Someone from the greenhouse usually takes care of the daman paperwork. Other than that, I either go to the Mokhtar or to Liban Post.
- 11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?
None. My wife takes care of it.
- 12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?
I use the work bus, so there's nothing to do there. As for the rest, we have an old family car that I got a few years ago. So I just drive it and need to remember when to refill it.
- 13- How did you get your current job?
I went job hunting and they hired me.
- 14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?
Yes it's good. Can't ask for better with what I know.
- 15- Do you use the bank? How?
No.
- 16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?
I am very good with plants, just not so good with people. I don't have many friends.
- 17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?
My future is my kids' future now. I want them to have the education I never had and hope they will have an easier life.
- 18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?
We're not allowed to discuss it at work and I don't know much about it. I watch the news just to know what's going on.

Interview 14

Pseudonym: Hanadi Kyryakos

Age: 26

Gender: Female

Family status: Engaged

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I am a cook at a hotel. I have been working there for three years now.

2- What is your daily routine?

I get to work at eleven in the morning and meet up with the head chef on duty. He tells me what I need to do and I start working on it. During the day, I get and prepare other orders. I leave work at around nine.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

Right now, there isn't much work because tourism is very low. When tourists come, it gets very busy and very tiring. As for the pay, I barely make enough.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

After I wake up, I have breakfast with my mom. Then I prepare myself, get dressed, put on makeup and fix my hair. Then I put on perfume and watch TV until ten. My fiancée picks me up then and drops me at the hotel on his way to work. He works at a restaurant.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

Sometimes, I have really strong migraines and I don't go to work on these days because I can't really open my eyes anymore. I try to take painkillers when I feel that a migraine is coming because when I am absent, it gets ducked from my salary.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

When I see my friends on my days off, we sometimes go to the mall with my fiancée and watch a movie or have dinner. At other times, we just meet up at someone's place and order a delivery or cook our own meal. What matters is that we spend time together.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Christian and am part of the church group and activities.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

A lot of my friends are also in the church group. Others were with me in school and some from work.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's great. I don't see my dad much though because he works in Abu Dhabi. My mom and I are best friends. I also love my fiancée and we hope to get married soon.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I need some papers for work so that I stay registered in Daman (social security). I usually go to the Mokhtar and he gets me the papers I need for a small extra fee. But that's ok because I don't have the time to go wait in line for my papers to be done. As for medicine and things like that, we just get the papers from the doctor or the pharmacy and we have someone from work who submits them and brings us the money a few years later. I just started getting paid for medication I bought in 2011.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

When I'm home, I help my mom with whatever she's doing. Sometimes it's the laundry, sometimes it's the cooking.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

Usually it's my fiancée's car because I don't drive. If he's busy or has work, I take the bus or a taxi depending on where I'm going. Either way, I need to know the roads and some detours.

13- How did you get your current job?

I submitted my CV to different restaurants and hotels. Some of them called and interviewed me. I took the best offer I got.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes I am. They treat me well and everything is good. When there is trouble, I try to solve it on my own. If I can't, I involve the manager.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Yes, my fiancée and I have a joint account and we collect money in it for our wedding. He also has a house loan that we pay together. I don't know how it all works because my fiancée took care of it. I just had to sign some papers and bring a photocopy of my ID and a statement of my salary.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I'm a good cook. Everyone like my cooking. My weakness would be that I am very trusting and it caused me a lot of trouble.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

My fiancée and I will get married and hopefully open our own restaurant.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I don't watch the news and I don't want to know what's going on. Only faith in God will help change things.

Interview 15

Pseudonym: Hoda Yaacoub

Age: 25

Gender: female

Family status: engaged

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I am a waitress and have been here for the past four years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I usually take the morning shift between ten and six unless it gets very busy. I get to work and get given my duties before we open up. I do them while chatting with the others. When customers start coming, I take orders, get food and clean up tables.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's good. My friends, family and fiancée are all here.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

130

The usual girl stuff: getting dressed in work uniform, fixing my hair and putting on makeup and perfume. I usually shower at night when I get back home. Also, once a week, sometimes more, I remove body hair.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. I watch what I eat and see a dietician when I think I'm gaining weight.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

Sometimes we just hang out and gossip or we go shopping. We're doing more shopping nowadays to prepare for my wedding.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I'm Christian but don't go to church often.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

I've known some of them since school and met others at work.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's very good. They're all busy with my wedding now.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

Nothing. If I need to, I think I'd go with my fiancé.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

Right now, since my fiancée is usually busy, I take his credit card and buy whatever I need for our house. I'm almost done with the important things like the bedroom and living room. The kitchen still needs a bit of work.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I walk to work. I just need to be careful on the roads. My fiancé drives me everywhere else.

13- How did you get your current job?

I applied and got it.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It's mainly just for fun. I might stay even after we get married until we have kids.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No, I just use my fiancé as ATM.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am a funny person and very friendly. My weakness is shopping. I love shopping.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

Right now, my plan is to finish the house and get married. We already set the date and are in the process of arranging the church and the reception.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

Who cares?

Interview 16

Pseudonym: Jameel Halawi

Age: 31

Gender: male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I am a delivery guy. I have been working here for the past year.

2- What is your daily routine?

I work the evening shift so I start work at five and finish at midnight. When I get to work, I wait for deliveries. Whenever I get one, I check the order to make sure everything's there because if they forget something, I have to do the delivery twice on one tip. So I check and pack the food in my backpack then make my way to the place where I should deliver. I check again with the receiving person, get the money, give change then get back to the restaurant for another delivery. I try to make at least ten to fifteen deliveries per shift.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

If they pay you, they think they own you. I changed more jobs than I can count in the past five years. It's very bad and they barely pay.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I brush my teeth in the morning and after lunch. I shower and fix my hair with gel before I go to work.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. I avoid smoking and alcohol and go for a run around the neighborhood in the morning.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

It depends what's on TV. We're all broke after the first week of the month.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

When I win the lottery, I'll start praying.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

Some I've known since school. Others are neighborhood friends.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

They don't approve of me. My dad kicked me out of the house when I was twenty-one because I didn't pass the official exams. He wanted me to find a job and come back. I found a job but never came back. I lived with my friends for a while and now I rent with a friend.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

None of that. I don't have daman nor anything else.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I clean my part and my friend takes care of his. As for the kitchen and bathroom, we always clean after we use them. We split the other bills in half.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have my motorcycle. I just have to know how to ride it.

13- How did you get your current job?

My friend fixed it for me.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

No, of course I'm not satisfied, but there is nothing I can do.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No I don't.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I'm a very honest person, but I have a bad temper.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I don't think about the future. I barely have enough time for the present.

- 18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

We don't have politics in Lebanon, we have a farm.

Interview 17

Pseudonym: Jana Hanna

Age: 22

Gender: female

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

- 1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I work at a supermarket. I have been here for two years now.

- 2- What is your daily routine?

I work the afternoon shift after all the suppliers have delivered their merchandise. I get the merchandise and the price tags. I put the price tags on the items and then clean the shelves and put the items on the shelves. If I finish before my shift is over, I clean the remaining empty shelves.

- 3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

What can we do? This is where we were born, this is where we work. If I ever get the chance to leave, I will.

- 4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I brush my hair and tie it then I put on makeup and perfume before I go to work.

- 5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. I go for walks whenever I have time.

- 6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

Shopping!

- 7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?
I go to church every Sunday and sometimes, I participate in church activities. I used to be in the church scouts before I started work.
- 8- How did you get to make your friends?
Some are from school, others from scouts and others from work.
- 9- How's your relationship with your family?
It's very good. I see them when I go up to the village in the weekend.
- 10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?
I don't. My dad takes care of these things.
- 11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?
I live in dorms so I have to keep my dorm room clean and tidy including the bathroom. We use a joint kitchen which we have to clean up after we use it.
- 12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?
Some of my friends have cars so they pick me up and we go. To work, I go on foot since it's ten minutes away. During the weekend, my brother usually picks me up on his way back there because he lives in Beirut too.
- 13- How did you get your current job?
My friend works there so she told me that they have vacancies. So I applied and got accepted.
- 14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?
It's ok I guess. If something is not so well, I tell the manager.
- 15- Do you use the bank? How?
Yes, I use it to get my salary and to pay my university tuition. To get my salary I just use the ATM. For my tuition, I give my registration number to the teller, pay him and get the receipt.
- 16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?
I am very friendly, but sometimes I feel stupid because I don't get jokes and comments quickly.
- 17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?
I want to graduate in marketing and then get a job in my field. Right now, I'm studying and trying to finish the courses I have left.
- 18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

Everyone wants to be the boss and no one wants to work. That's how I see it.

Interview 18

Pseudonym: Jihad Rashed

Age: 39

Gender: male

Family status: engaged

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I work as night security in a company. I have been here for seven years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I sleep during the day and wake up in the early afternoon. I shower, eat and finish whatever I have to do for my parents if they need anything and then go to work. I get there at around nine in the evening right before they close and stay till six in the morning as soon as they open. Usually, I go for walks around the building or sit around and chat with the security guy from the other building.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's ok as long as I am living with my parents. My fiancée will start a job in Dubai next year so we're planning to get married in the summer and move there.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I need to shower, get dressed and brush my teeth. I have to wear my security clothes and make sure I have my keys with me before I go to work.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

Not yet, thank God. Though I don't know what will happen after marriage.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

When I see my friends on my days off, we usually go for dinners with our fiancées or girlfriends or wives. Sometimes we just sit and chat for hours.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

No. I don't care much about any religions.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

From the neighborhood and some friends of friends.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's good. I still live with them for now. It's the only way for me to save up enough money to get married.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I do the daman for my parents since they are insured under my name. I usually go down to daman and then each person will send you to the next and you wait your whole day to get your things done.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I buy the groceries sometimes on my way home, especially the vegetables since I can get them fresh early in the morning on my way home.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I use the bus usually. I leave my car for the days off or the trips with my fiancée. To use the bus, you have to know which one to get on because sometimes, two buses may be on the same road but each goes in a different direction later on based on their numbers. Usually, each bus has his roads printed in the front so you can see them. If not, just make sure to tell him where you are going and he'll tell you whether it's on his way or not.

13- How did you get your current job?

I applied at a security company and they sent me here. They asked for many forms that I had to get from Liban Post like a sejel adle (judiciary register).

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It's ok. It's a peaceful neighborhood. Nothing happened here in all my seven years. When I don't like something, I report it to the security company and they handle it.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Yes, I have a joint savings account with my fiancée. We use it to save money for our wedding.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very patient. I can't think of a weakness now.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

We're getting married and going to Dubai. That's it for now.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

It's the reason why everyone is leaving the country.

Interview 19

Pseudonym: Kamel Abu Rihan

Age: 47

Gender: male

Family status: married with 3 kids

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I own a bus and I drive around just like the other buses. Sometimes, I get hired by people for trips. I've been doing this for more than thirteen years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I get on the road at around six in the morning and drive my road till noon. I have lunch at home then do another couple of rounds before I retire for the evening. In the winter, I have school students in the morning so I start my rounds earlier. I have one or two rounds until it's time to pick them up again then I retire early. In the summer, there are no schools so I just do more rounds.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

Thank God, it's well for me. Especially with all the Syrians nowadays, we have plenty of work.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

Sometimes, I have to shower two or three times every day, especially in the summer. I don't have any more teeth to brush but I do have to clean up my wajbe (replacement teeth). As you can see, I don't have any hair to comb anymore either. For my bus, I have to make sure I fill it almost every night before I go home and, if I hear any suspicious noises, I open up the hood to see what's wrong and fix it. I know this bus by heart and know how to fix anything that might happen to it.

- 5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

Sitting and driving all day caused me some back problems. I avoid lifting heavy things when I can.

- 6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

I haven't seen my friends in ages. When I do, I usually take them on my ride and we catch up.

- 7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I don't have time for that. Sometimes, I turn on some prayers on the radio and pray along.

- 8- How did you get to make your friends?

I know many of them from my past job at the supermarket.

- 9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's good when I see them. My kids are all working now and they spend on the house. My eldest works at a bank, the second works at a pharmacy, the third works at a supermarket while he finishes his university studies. He's studying business.

- 10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

Now that the kids are above eighteen, they do their own things. For me, I do the mandatory insurance (daman elzeme) and the mechanic checkup for my bus. The insurance I have a broker who renews it for me and I pay him. As for the checkup, I take the bus, get it checked up and fix whatever I have to.

- 11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

My wife takes care of it because I'm mostly out of the house. I used to do some repairs when things got broken but now that my kids are older and none of them are married yet, they do it.

- 12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have my bus and that's all I use.

- 13- How did you get your current job?

When my father passed away, he left me a small sum of money which I used to buy this bus.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

I'm satisfied because I don't have a boss telling me what to do. If I don't like a customer, I either tell him to get off or I never pick him up again.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

Yes, I save some money for when I'm older, in case my kids won't support my wife and me.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I have a good sense of humor. Some people wait for my bus even though others pass before me because they like me. My weakness is that I can't stand annoying people so I just ask them out of the bus.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

I plan to retire in a few years, sell the bus and maybe open a small shop instead of the garage under the house.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

A lot of people try to ask me about my opinion and I never answer because it's bad for business. Many idiots will not ride with me if I am of an opposing political view.

Interview 20

Pseudonym: Khaled Abdul Rahman

Age: 26

Gender: male

Family status: Single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I'm a cook at this bakery. I have been working here for the past three years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I work a long day with a two hour lunch break. I start at around six and finish at around eight or nine, depending on the day. It's only me and the owner of the bakery. We start our day by preparing the dough for the manakish. Then we prepare some for the early customers. Between morning and noon, we mainly make and sell manakish. At around half past ten, we start making less manakish and more sandwiches. At around two, I take my break and come back at four. It's usually lazy in the afternoon so we do the cleaning and the restocking. At around six or seven, we start getting more orders for sandwiches until we close up at around eight. Before we close up, we do a quick mop of the floor and cleanup the cooking stations.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's ok. My boss is great. He taught me everything I know about the business. When I have enough money, I plan to go back to Egypt and start my own bakery.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

When I wake up in the morning, I shower because it helps me wake up. Then I get dressed, fix my hair and come to work. I usually have breakfast with the boss as soon as we make our first two manakish.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No. I eat a lot of vegetables and fruits and I think it keeps me healthy especially in the winter.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

I only see my friends sometime on Mondays since it's my day off. I usually wake up around noon and fix up the house until they finish work. They know it's my day off so they come to my place straight after work and we hang out and watch TV while drinking tea.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I used to be in the Muslim Youth back in Egypt. I don't have time to go pray at the mosque anymore or do the five prayers as I used to, but I fast during Ramadan and make sure to pray whenever I can.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

I knew some of them from Egypt and they encouraged me to come and try my luck in Lebanon. Others, I met as friends of friends.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's great. My parents found me a potential wife. So I'm travelling back to Egypt soon to meet her and her family. We'll probably get engaged before I come back to Lebanon.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I go with my boss once a year to renew the residency. I don't do anything but wait around and answer if they ask me anything.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I have to pay the rent and keep it clean for when my friends come over. I also have to pay the electricity and the water and it's usually not a lot because I barely stay home.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

If I ever need to go anywhere, I walk up to the bus route and take the bus. I walk around a lot and it's good that I live close to work. Since I don't know Lebanon's geography very well, I usually ask the bus driver for the best route to take or the best combination of buses. This usually works. Otherwise, I call up one of my friends and ask him for advice.

13- How did you get your current job?

I came to replace my cousin when he travelled back to Egypt. He was supposed to go for a month and come back so I was to replace him for that period. However, when he got there, his parents had found him a wife, so he married her and stayed. I don't know when or if he will ever come back.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes I love it here. I'm learning a lot. I usually try to solve my problems on my own but, if things get complicated, I ask my master for advice and he is usually very helpful.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No. I send my money to my parents. They use what they need and save the rest for my wedding.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am a very friendly guy. And I can't think of a weakness right now.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

It depends on my parents and their choice of a wife for me. If I like her, we will get engaged. Then, as my family prepares the wedding, I work a bit more here in Lebanon to save up some money to open my bakery in Egypt. Maybe I'll work there with my wife.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I don't have time for any of that and my boss does not allow politics in the bakery. Many customers cause problems because of it and the bakery ends up damaged.

Interview 21

Pseudonym: Rosa Liyanage

Age: 22

Gender: Female

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I work as a helper in a school. I have been here for two years.

2- What is your daily routine?

I wake up at around six and prepare myself before the students and teacher start arriving. I open up the main gate and wait at the gate until a teacher comes and takes over morning duty. Five minutes before the bell rings, I open the hallways to the classrooms and then go to the administration kitchen to make and serve coffee for guests. Half an hour before the first break bell rings, I go down to the cafeteria and help prepare for the break. Then, when the bell rings, I help the cafeteria lady in serving the kids. After that, I have a half hour break before I go back to the administration to make and serve more coffee. Then it's the same for second break. When the kids leave the school, I help the other helpers in cleaning up the classes and locking up. When we finish, we sometimes sit together and chat.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

The payment is much better than in India, but I miss my family and friends there.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I quickly get dressed in helper uniforms then have a quick sandwich for breakfast. I tie my hair because it would take too long to brush.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

No I'm fine. I don't do anything.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

We sit and chat. Sometimes, we watch funny videos on Youtube.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

I am Hindu, but I can't practice that in Lebanon. Sometimes, when I am doing my work, I repeat my mantra [Hindu prayer] in my head.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

In India, they are my friends from school. Here, they are the people I work with. We see one another every day so we became like family.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

It's very good. I call them almost every day because I miss them.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

Once a year I go with one of the bus drivers to renew my residency. I don't do anything, the driver knows who to talk to.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

I have a small room where I sleep here. I keep it clean and I lock it when I am outside.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I don't go anywhere much. I stay here. If, during long vacations like Christmas, we want to go anywhere, we call a taxi and split the money between us. We always go in groups because some taxi drivers are bad. One tried to rape my friend last year.

13- How did you get your current job?

I took the place of my sister when she went back to India.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

The school owners shout sometimes and some students are mean to us, but it's ok. If something is wrong, I talk with my friends and try to solve it.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am never late, but I'm sometimes clumsy and drop things by accident.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

When I have enough money, I will go back to India and open a small shop for my father in my village. I will work with him there until I get married.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

I don't know. It's like in India, all lies.

Interview 22

Pseudonym: *Roy Khoury*

Age: 20

Gender: male

Family status: single

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I have been working as a cashier at this supermarket for a little over one year.

2- What is your daily routine?

I usually take the afternoon shift from five till eleven because I have university classes in the morning. So I get there and take over the cash register. Before I open, I check if the money in the drawer matches the number on the system and then start accepting customers. I keep taking customers until ten. When we close at ten, I check the register again and make sure everything is in order. Then, I wait for the manager to pass by and check before I am allowed to leave.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

I'm getting used to it. When I finish my major at the university, we'll see what happens. Maybe things will have gotten better by then.

- 4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?
I don't have much time between my last class and my work so I prepare myself in the morning. It's the usual, I shower, brush my teeth, put on gel and deodorant, prepare my bag and make sure I take the deodorant with me in case it's a hot day.
- 5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?
It's too early to start worrying about this.
- 6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?
We hang out at the university cafeteria between classes. Sometimes we go to the movies and dinner in the weekend.
- 7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?
No.
- 8- How did you get to make your friends?
From the university. I lost touch with my school friends a while ago.
- 9- How's your relationship with your family?
A lot less problems now that I have work and university. I barely see them so I don't have time to hear them nag.
- 10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?
Nothing so far. I only renewed my passport and applied for a visa a few months ago when the university sent me to a conference in Belgium. I had to go to the mokhtar to fill all the papers and then I took all the papers to the General Security office. I paid and came back a week later to get my passport. Then I checked online for the papers I needed for Belgium. I prepared them and applied. I got it three weeks later.
- 11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?
Nothing. I just make sure to put my laundry in the bathroom for my mom.
- 12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?
I usually take the bus. You have to know where to get on and where to get off. You have to know some alternative routes in case the bus makes an unexpected detour.
- 13- How did you get your current job?
From the university placement office. They advertised so I applied and got accepted.
- 14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

It's good for me now. It helps pay the remainder of my university tuition. If I'm not satisfied, I talk to the manager.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

I pay my tuition and I have a small savings account. I usually put a bit of my salary in my account every month.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very smart, that's why they sent me to Belgium and that's why I have a partial scholarship. My weakness is that I am sometimes blunt and say things a bit too harshly.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

Of course. I plan to finish my BS and then my MS. In between, I plan to get a job in my own domain.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

The people has to make a stand against the politicians. Problem is that almost everyone is with one politician and another, which keeps these politicians in power and they keep ruining the country.

Interview 23

Pseudonym: Sabri Maamoun

Age: 36

Gender: male

Family status: married

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I'm a concierge and I have been here for the past seven years.

2- What is your daily routine?

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

147

I don't have a set routine. Every day is different. Sometimes I get called at six, sometimes no one calls me till ten. Once a week, I mop the stairs and every day, I sweep the entrance.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

It's good. I don't think I will ever go back to Syria. I got used to life here.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

Sometimes, I just put on my clothes and go up to whoever calls. Sometimes, I wake up at my leisure and shower before breakfast.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

Nothing so far. I drink a lot of water.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

They come over or I visit them and we drink Matte and sometimes smoke.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

No.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

When I moved here, some of them came to meet me and we became friends. We always make sure to meet any new concierges who come.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My father died when I was very young and my mother passed away ten years ago. All I have is my brother. He also works in Lebanon and we get together often.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

I renew my residency every year at the General Security office and, every few months, I pass by the municipality to answer any questions they have because they usually ask all Syrians to pass by. For my residency, I usually go with some friends and my wife so that we help each other out. We submit our papers and come back when they tell us to.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

My wife does everything related to our small apartment. I repair things when they are broken. She sometimes helps me with my work as well.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have a motorcycle and I use it.

13- How did you get your current job?

I used to work at a supermarket nearby. When he didn't want me full time anymore, it happened that they needed a concierge here, so I took the job. I still do deliveries for the supermarket sometimes.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Yes it's very good. It's an easy job and my wife and I don't spend much.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No need. If we ever have too much money, I will consider it.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I'm easy to satisfy and that makes me a very happy person in my life. My weakness is that I am sometimes slow in working.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

My wife and I want to have kids soon. We're trying.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

It's a headache I don't want to deal with.

Interview 24

Pseudonym: Sameer Farran

Age: 40

Gender: male

Family status: married with one child

Introduction:

The purpose of this interview is to find out what skills you use in your daily life. Your answers will help us in creating a life-skill bank for individuals with special needs in Lebanon. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are receiving no payment whatsoever for your participation. Moreover, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym to preserve the confidentiality of the interview. Do you agree to participate?

1- What is your occupation and how long have you been in it?

I work as a mall security guy. I have been working here since last year.

2- What is your daily routine?

Some times I have the morning shift and other times I have afternoon shift. We have a roster that is given to us monthly and it includes our days off and all. Morning shift starts at nine when staff starts to come in. We make sure that we know them all and send away those we don't. When the mall opens, I'm usually stationed at the parking entrance where I make sure that all customers get a parking ticket. And, for those getting out, I make sure that they put the ticket in the machine correctly. If they forgot to pay, I have the ticket scanner and they can pay me. It's almost the same whether my shift is in the morning or the afternoon.

3- How do you feel about working in Lebanon?

A lot of people think they own us and treat us badly if we tell them not to do something. One time, a guy insisted that he paid the parking fees inside while, on his ticket, it shows that he didn't. He started swearing and cussing and blocking the way to everyone. Eventually, I had to call for help to move this guy away and let the people pass. Another time, it was during the holiday season so the mall was very busy. A lady parks her car in between two lanes. I ran after her and asked her to move it because other people need to park there. Thankfully, she came to move it but kept nagging all the time about wasting her time.

4- What are the skills you use when you are preparing yourself for work (like washing up and brushing your teeth)?

I'm not here to meet ladies so I don't use hair gel and all that stuff. I just put on my security uniform and comb my hair back. That's it.

5- Do you have any health issues? How do you take care of your health?

I've had a cough for a while now. It's because of smoking, I know. I am trying to cut down.

6- What is your favorite pastime with friends?

I don't have time for friends. I spend my time between work and home.

7- Do you belong to any religious or social organizations or groups?

No.

8- How did you get to make your friends?

Back when I was younger, I used to have friends from work. But I learned not to make friends with colleagues. You can't trust everyone. I am just respectful to everyone and that's it.

9- How's your relationship with your family?

My wife works at a supermarket and comes back in time when my daughter comes back from school. They are both great.

10- What government business do you deal with (daman, etc...) and how do you go about it?

The mall management takes care of our daman issues. I only go to the mokhtar if they ask for papers like proof of residency and all.

11- What are your responsibilities regarding your house?

When I have afternoon shifts, I sometimes do the cooking. I'm not a very good cook but my food is ok. My wife is way better though.

12- What kind of transportation do you use? What skills do you need to use it effectively?

I have a small car. I need to have a driving permit and to know how to survive Lebanese drivers. They are crazy sometimes.

13- How did you get your current job?

I applied. They offered the same salary but more days off and closer to home, so I took it.

14- Are you satisfied with your job? What do you do when you're not satisfied?

Other than the problems with some stubborn people, it's all good. If things are not going well, I talk to the manager.

15- Do you use the bank? How?

No. We barely have enough left by the end of the month.

16- What is something you consider your strength? And your weakness?

I am very careful and diligent. I know when someone is planning something bad and stop them before they have the chance. Especially kids who want to pull pranks on each other in the parking. I don't know what my weakness can be, maybe my daughter.

17- Do you have plans for the future? How do you work on achieving them?

If we work well here, we may get a promotion every couple of years. So, if I get it next year, my wife and I are thinking of getting another child.

18- What is your opinion about politics in Lebanon? What do you think will be able to change things?

Forget it. There's no use discussing it.