# The Measurement and Assessment of Soft-Skills in Uganda:

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http://lgihe.org

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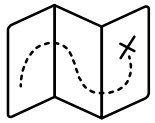
# Our Journey



From a simple exchange of ideas between five friends in Uganda to the certification of LGIHE in September 2013.

## Our Vision

To be a leading institution of higher learning that has a transformative impact on society in Uganda and throughout Africa by improving the quality of education and professional development.

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# Our Work

## Academic Courses

We offer a unique methodology and approach in the field of education:

- Primary Education Diploma
- Early Childhood Development Certificate
- Leadership Diploma

## Professional Development Trainings

Trainings for school leaders, teachers, social workers, medical personnel and workshops for students and parents.

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John Vianney, LGIHE Principal

# Our Work

## Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

LGIHE has a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to measure and improve its response to education gaps.

## Curriculum Development

LGIHE is the leading consultant in the curricula development for the School of Education at St. Mary's College, Juba, South Sudan.

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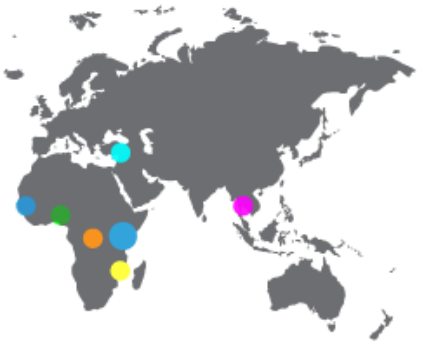
# Our Reach

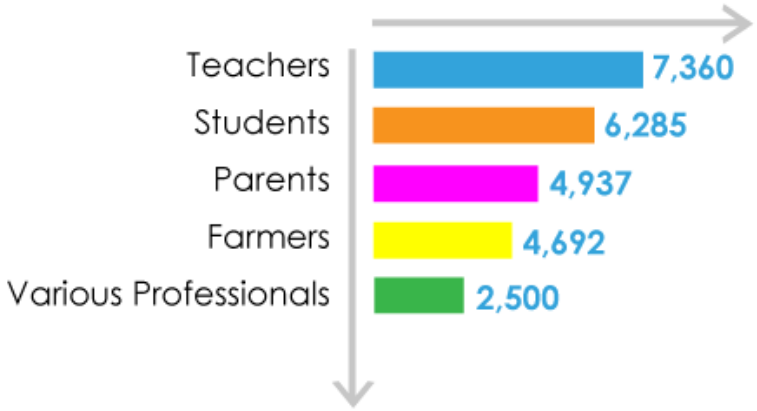
**ASIA & THE MIDDLE EAST**
**Trainings and Activities**

PALESTINE, MYANMAR, THAILAND

**AFRICA**
**Trainings and Activities**

UGANDA, SOUTH SUDAN, RWANDA, BURUNDI, KENYA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, REPUBLIC OF CONGO, MOZAMBIQUE, COTE D'IVOIRE, SIERRA LEONE, NIGERIA






**25,000+**
**PARTICIPANTS**

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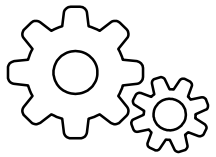
# What we learnt



- Teachers concentrate on maximizing learners' test scores at the expense of deeper learning.

- Students who leave secondary school are often not prepared for life outside school and working adult life.

Starting from this understanding, in collaboration with UNEB, LGIHE has started in 2016 the research on soft skills assessment.

# Research on Soft Skills

**First Step: Understanding of the skills required on the labour Market**

- Problem solving and critical thinking,
- Emotional consistency,
- Conflict resolution,
- Communication,
- Resilience,
- Assertiveness,
- Patience,
- Time management,
- Responsibility,
- Teamwork and Cooperation,
- Self-awareness,
- Integrity and
- Sense of Belonging.

# Research on Soft Skills

## Second Step: Design of the soft-skills assessment toolkit

The aim was to explore possible mechanisms of measuring and assessing soft skills in an objective, valid and contextualised manner.

The initial toolkit included five sets of tools:

1. Student-self reporting tool
2. Multi-Teacher student rating tool
3. Teacher self-reporting questionnaire
4. Student-Teacher rating
5. Head teacher questionnaire

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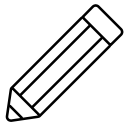
# Design of Soft Skills Assessment Toolkit

## 1. Student Self-Reporting tool

- 11 constructs (soft skills) and school/home factors

The purpose of this tool was to measure 11 soft skills from the student perspective and provide information about the correlation between soft skills and numeracy and literacy skills, school / home related factors.

# Design of Soft Skills Assessment Tools

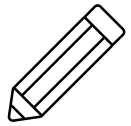


## 1. Student Self-Reporting tool (Cont.)

We used two pretests:

- ***Pre-test I*** comprised 79 items of 11 soft skills constructs and tested on 380 secondary students of S. 2 on a rating scale of or (a 1-5 Likert scale).
- ***Pre-test II*** contained 71 items of 11 soft skill constructs. These 11 constructs were tested on 530 students of S.3 based on a rating scale of 1-3 or (a 1-3 Likert scale)

# Design of Soft Skills Assessment Toolkit



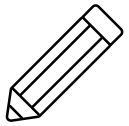
## 2. Multi-Teacher student rating tool

The purpose of this tool was to validate the data from self-reported student tool and check on the level of bias and social desirability associated with the self-reported tools.

**Examples:**

- He/she accomplishes what needs to be done during the day (Responsibility)
- He/she does not give up on a task until it is finished (Grit)
- He/she cannot hold his/her opinion or position because it is different from others' (Assertiveness)

# The Pilot of Soft Skills Assessment Toolkit



## 3. Teacher self-reporting Questionnaire

The aim of this tool was to assess teacher's self-concept and satisfaction levels and how they affect students' soft skills

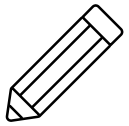
**Examples:**

I find real enjoyment in my work.

I often feel that I don't have much to offer my fellow teachers in my school.

I am satisfied with my role as a teacher.

# The Pilot of Soft Skills Assessment Toolkit



## 4. Student-Teacher Rating Tool

The purpose of this tool is to measure the levels of teacher satisfaction and teacher-student relationship using student perspective.

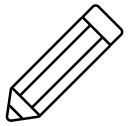
**Examples:**

I feel safe and comfortable with my teacher

My teacher always tells me I am capable of passing and excelling in exams.

My teacher expects me to do my best all the time in this class

# The Pilot of Soft Skills Assessment Toolkit



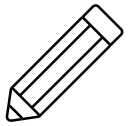
## 5. Head teacher Questionnaire

The purpose of this tool was to generate more information about school factors so as to provide a relationship between these factors and students' levels of soft skills.

**Questions about:**

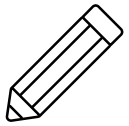
- The rate of teacher-turn over and why
- Availability of school facilities eg library
- school population in terms of teacher-student ratio

# Key Observations: Soft-Skills Assessment Toolkit



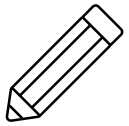
- The toolkit is comprehensive because the tools complement each other to give a description of how soft skills develop.
- The student self-reporting tool is a relatively simple and efficient way of collecting important information on the level of soft skills of a large group of people (large-scale national surveys).
- The results of the students self-reporting tool are well distributed (showing a relatively low bias effect).

# Key Observations: Soft-Skills Assessment Toolkit



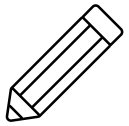
- The students self-reporting tool indicates that students with strong soft skills also score high in literacy and numeracy
- The use/visit to school library and sports activities were found to be linked to high scores in soft skills
- The toolkit reveals that a positive teacher-student relationship enhances students' soft skills

# Challenges: Soft-Skills Assessment Toolkit



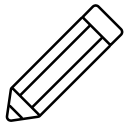
- Multi-teacher student rating tool was found not a reliable tool to use in a context where schools have not yet established systems with strong teacher-student relationships.
- The 5 point Likert scale used at the pretest level was not showing reliable results. We opted for a 3 point Likert scale that still could be improved for better interpretation of the “middle” scores.
- The toolkit, developed for large scale assessments, lacks qualitative components of assessment, quite useful for formative purposes.

# Next Steps for Improving the Toolkit



- Modify and retest the Likert scale
- Develop a student observation tool that could be used at classroom level by the teachers (assessment for learning)
- Modify the Multi-teacher rating tool to be used as a continuous assessment tool instead of using it as one-time assessment tool

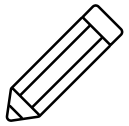
# Next Step: Research on HOT Questions



The question about the possibility of the current assessment system to positively influence deep learning of concepts and skills required for life beyond school therefore remains central to our work. We have started to:

- Collaborate with UNEB to establish the proportion of High Order Thinking skills (HOTs) questions in the UCE exams.
- Collaborate with UNEB to increase the proportion of HOTs questions in the UCE exams
- Collaborate with schools through Continuous Professional Development courses on the teaching and assessment of HOTs

# Policy Implications

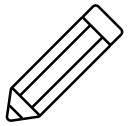


- Incorporating HOTs and soft skills in the national assessment and examination framework will motivate teachers and students to focus on such skills

- To work with MoES (Teacher Instruction and Education Training) to help teachers implement student-centred teaching methodologies that enhance learners soft skills

- Teacher Instruction and Education Training (TIET) will be in position to guide teachers to understand their impact on students' learning as well as the importance of teachers' self-awareness and motivation towards students' soft skills and integrate continuous holistic assessment (promote the use of the Toolkit)

# Policy Implications



- In terms of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, focus needs to be put on HOTs and soft skills required by students to flourish in their life instead of focusing on lecture style teaching

- The toolkit is critical to the inspectorate of education (DES) to employ a holistic approach taking into account school environment, culture and the entire educational structures that affect the development of soft skills and other learning outcomes beyond test scores.

# Thanks for listening

## Are there any questions?

For more information,

go to: http://lgihe.org

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