



INFOGRAPHIC REPORT

2019 NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN PRIMARY
SCHOOLS
DHAKA, BANGLADESH

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The needs analysis of One 2 Think focused on dropouts and 21st-century skills/ life skills. We went to 10 schools of different types in underprivileged areas of Dhaka; four NGO-run schools, three public schools, two non-formal and one private school.

We conducted 73 individual interviews (29 students (from grade 1 to grade 8, aged between 8 and 13), 26 teachers, and 18 guardians), 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with an average of 5 participants (10 with students and 10 with parents, separately), and 27 classroom observations¹.

Although our study is mainly qualitative, we decided to quantify our data because there were tendencies in responses and to make them more easily understandable (Royer et al., 2019). However, many quotations from participants are shared. We should also note that interviewees could give more than one answer.

73

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS



29 students from grade 1 to grade 8, aged between 8 and 13, 26 teachers, and 18 guardians.

27

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS



From grade 1 to grade 8.

20

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS



Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with an average of 5 participants (10 with students and 10 with parents).

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS



We mostly had the opportunity to observe Bangla, Math, English and Science lessons.



Almost all lessons were lecture-style, and teacher-centered (focus of students on the teacher) and during activities they worked either collectively or individually.



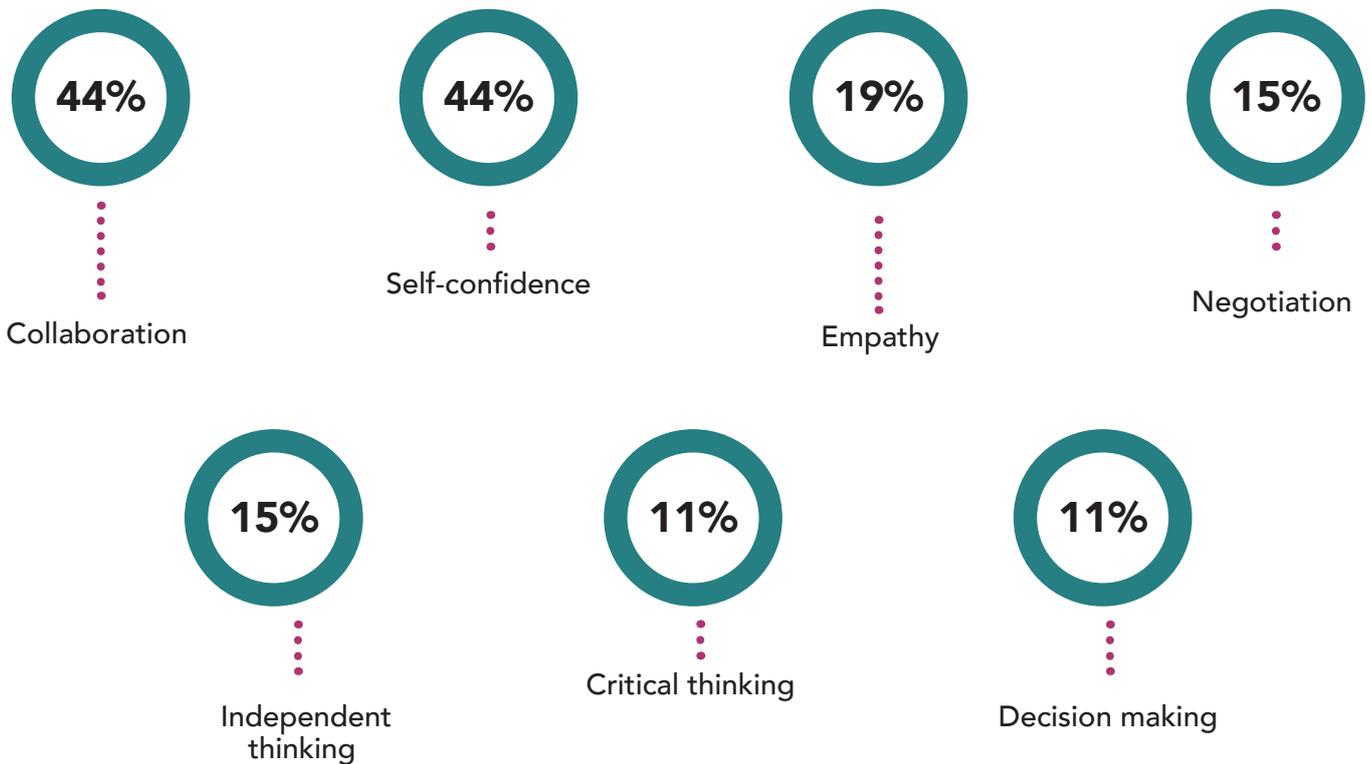
Repetition and memorization were the main learning methods.



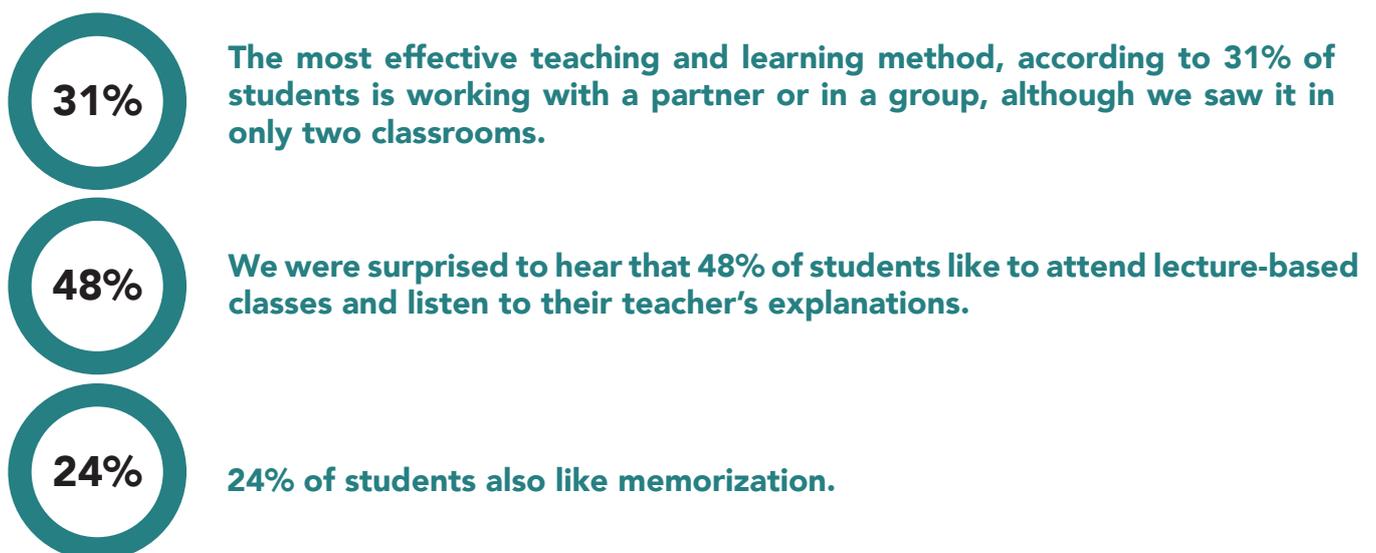
Students showed no misbehavior issue.

¹ If you are interested by all the results, please ask for the full report: info@one2think.org.

The following 21st-century-skills were observed in classrooms (e.g: collaboration in 44% of classrooms):



INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) RESPONSES



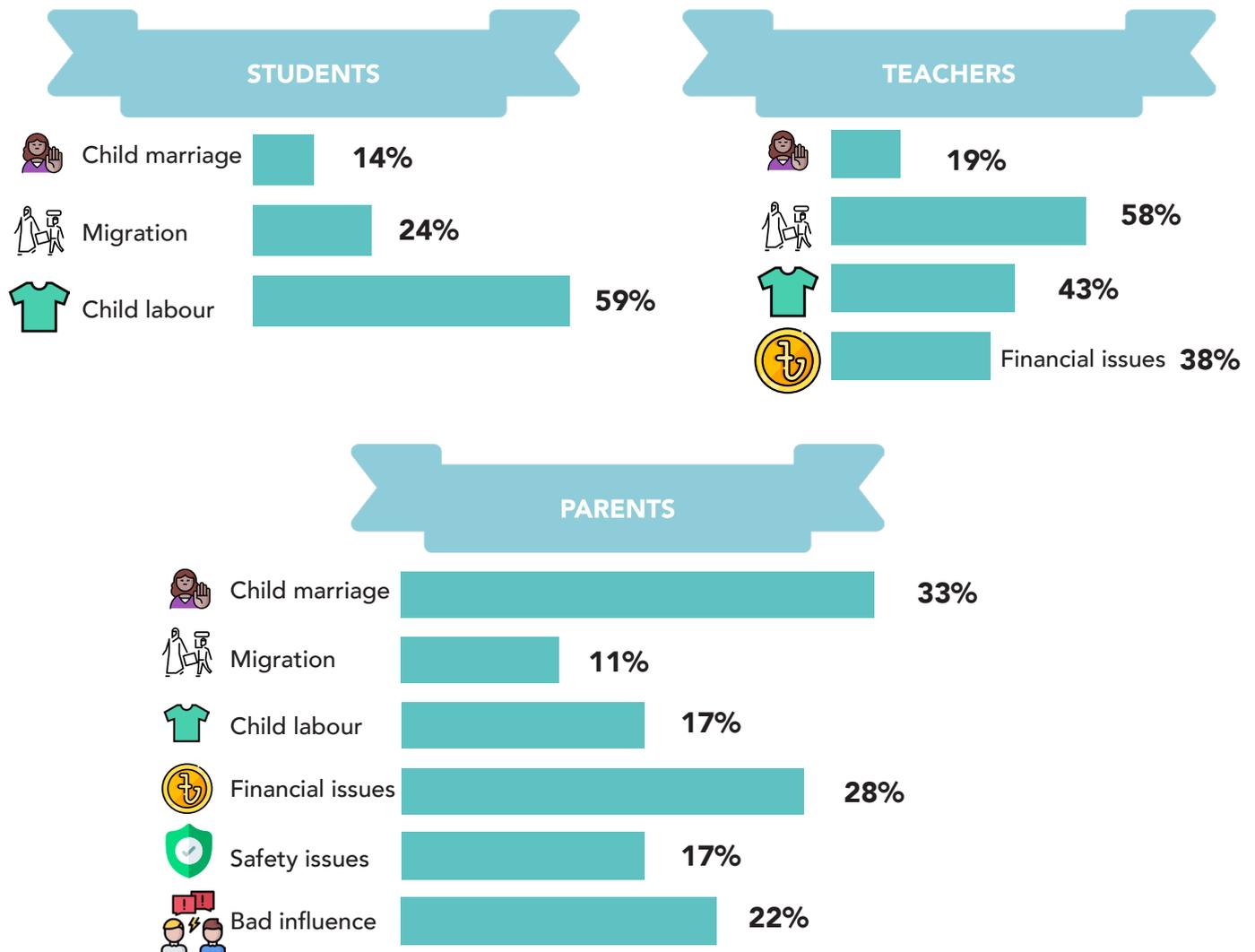
We believe that there is a bias in these responses, because most of them had never experienced any other form of learning method. For example, one student said:

Listening from teachers. This is how you understand most? Yes, we never have group discussions²

²Quotations were translated from Bengali.

SCHOOL DROPOUTS

According to interviewees, the following are the main reasons for dropouts, they can concern the participants themselves (students) or children they know (teachers and parents)³:



One of the students told us that her grandparents and uncles forced her sister to marry an older man, after which she stopped attending school to take care of the household. She was scared to be the next one:

My uncles and grandparents want to marry me too, I am pressured, but I disagree. Fortunately, my parents want me to go to school.

A father confessed that his son is victim of bad influence and started using drugs:

Only my son, he dropped out for 3 years. He plays, he hangs out in the street and takes drugs. My son doesn't want to go to school. He started hanging out with other bad boys. Also, I work so I couldn't control whether he was going to school or not. He doesn't work either.

MAIN CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

14% of children highlighted violence towards them or between their parents as their main issue. One student that usually studies in a Madrasah (religious school) confessed that safety at school, particularly not being beaten by his teacher was his primary concern:

(...) they can just make comments and scare us, that's enough. They don't need to beat us.

In 40% of schools, during Focus Group Discussions, students pointed to studies as their main challenge. They are under pressure to obtain the best grades and the atmosphere is very competitive. Safety and harassment in the streets were also discussed.



14% of children highlighted violence towards them or between their parents as their main issue.



44% of parents emphasized on financial issues (limited income) as their main challenge.

My husband takes drugs, he drives vehicles on the road but doesn't have a proper job, he only pays for the food. I have to pay for everything else, the rent, for the children. I earn 6000BDT (70\$) so I spend 3000BDT (35\$) in the rent and the rest for children. I struggle a lot. I must send my older girl to the garment factory. But she likes to study so it's sad.

(non-formal school student's mother)



Financial problems are coupled with family issues in 17% of cases (between husbands and wives, for example).

Concerning their children's challenges, parents highlighted a "rumor" that spread out in Dhaka throughout 2019, about gangs kidnapping children and cutting their heads. Many parents were worried about it as the topic was raised in 40% of schools during Group Discussions:

There is child trafficking. They cut heads of children. A girl was coming back from shopping they took her by the hair. I saw it. We don't know who does it. Police doesn't do much, nor the government. (NGO run school's parents).

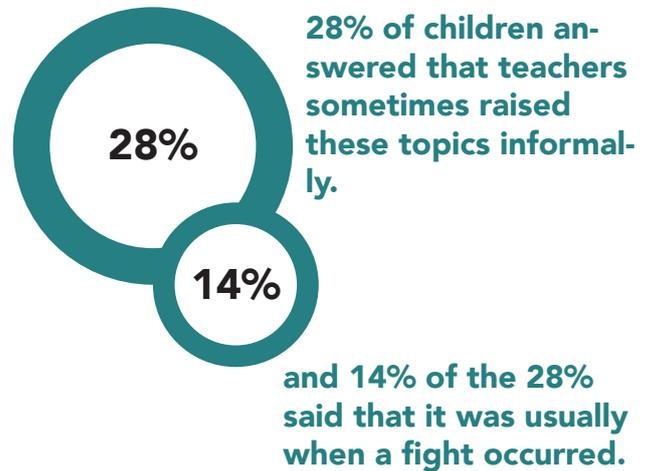
21ST-CENTURY SKILLS / LIFE SKILLS

34% of students said that teachers discuss life skills during lessons, through books, for example. However, when we asked which books, they usually answered Coran, Islam book or Moral education book:

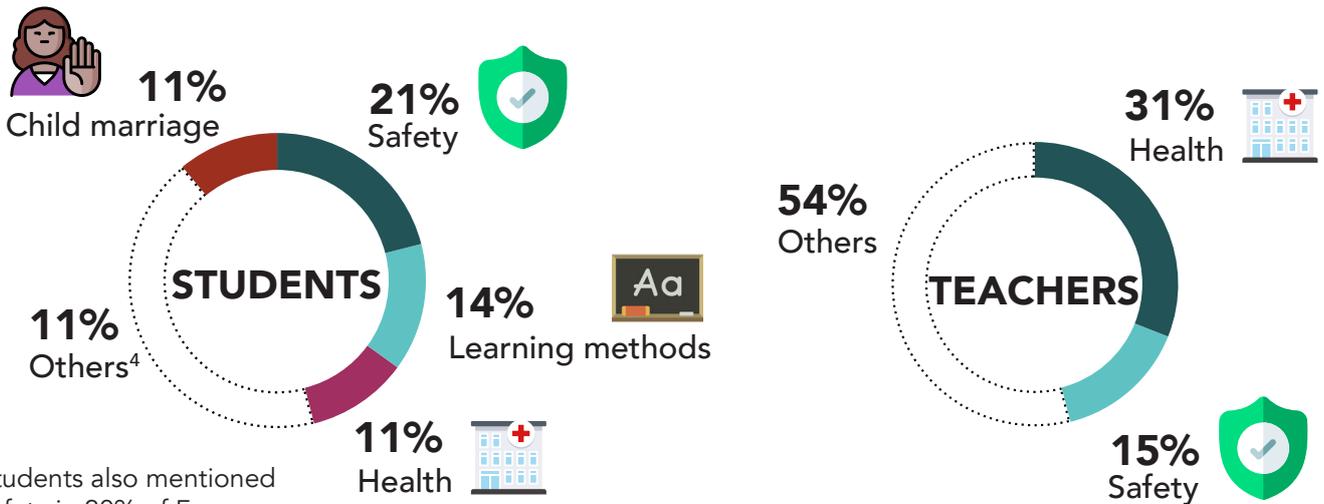
Yes, we learn these in Islam book (...). We also learn that it's not good to steal, to fight. (...) We should learn these more at school, so we will grow up properly and teach these to others. (...).

One of our findings is that the understanding of life skills of students, parents and teachers at first was mistaken for moral education or religion, since there is a thin line between them.

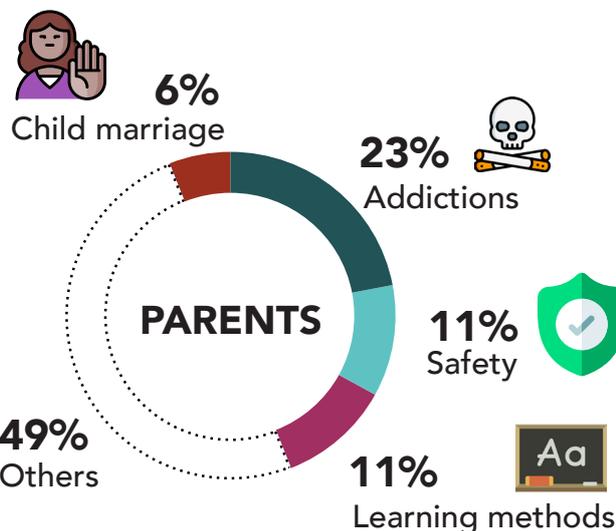
Although there are similarities, we do not want to infringe on existing subjects, moreover, our aim is to provide students with skills to face their challenges and risks, and not manners and respect towards older people, which they already learn in those subjects.



Areas where life skills are the most needed by children, according to participants:



Students also mentioned safety in 20% of Focus Group Discussions, child marriage in 10% of them, and child labour, also in 10% of them.



Parents raised the same topics during FGD. In 20% of FGD, they referred to safety, in another 20%, to child marriage, while in 10%, they mentioned addictions, and in another 10%, learning methods.

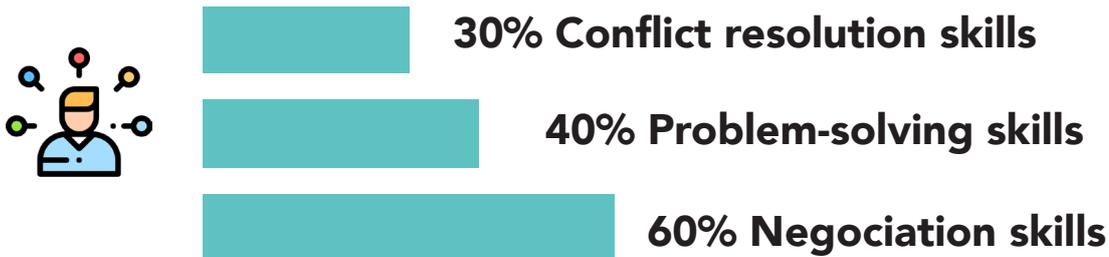
5 ⁴"Others" can include minority, irrelevant responses, and sometimes no response by interviewees. We decided to represent main and relevant responses. Minority responses are represented in quotations a few times.

21st-century skills that are the most needed by students, according to participants:

STUDENTS

This question was more difficult to answer for students, we had more responses during FGD than during individual interviews, where only 14% students highlighted conflict resolution.

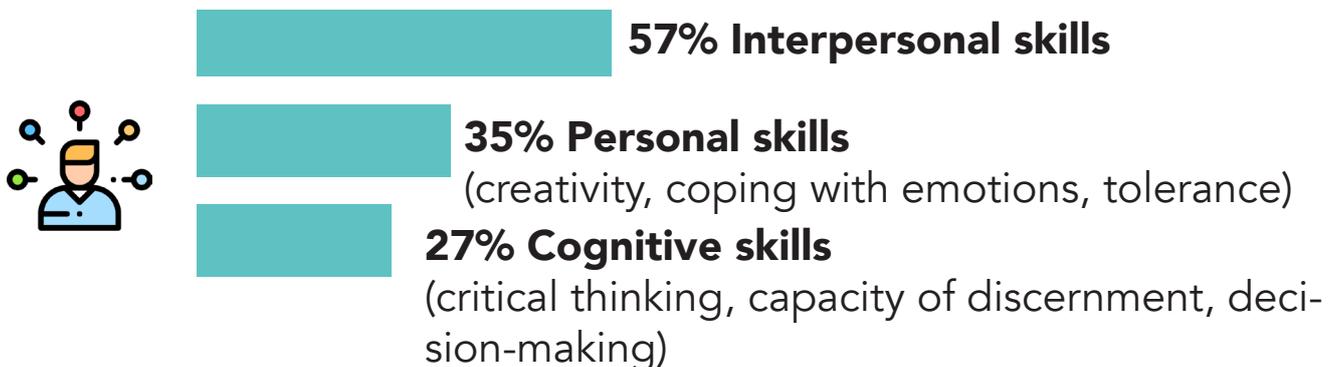
21st-century skills raised by children during Focus Group Discussions⁵:



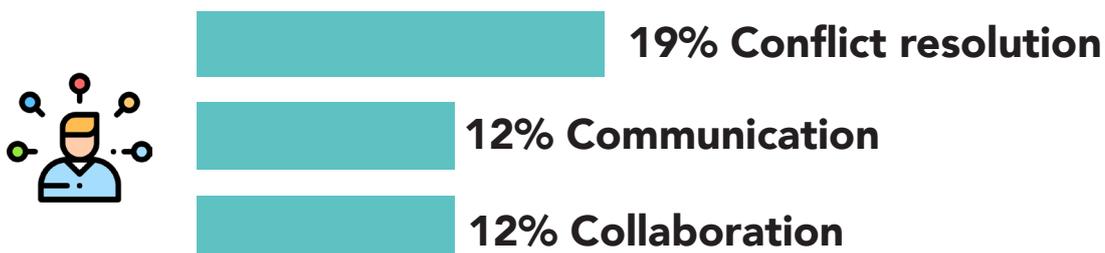
I can solve my problem of understanding English by getting better coaching and being attentive. I can get coaching by making my family understand my needs and by convincing them, said one of the students of a public school, during a FGD.

TEACHERS

Teachers suggested a variety of skills, that we gathered in 3 categories:



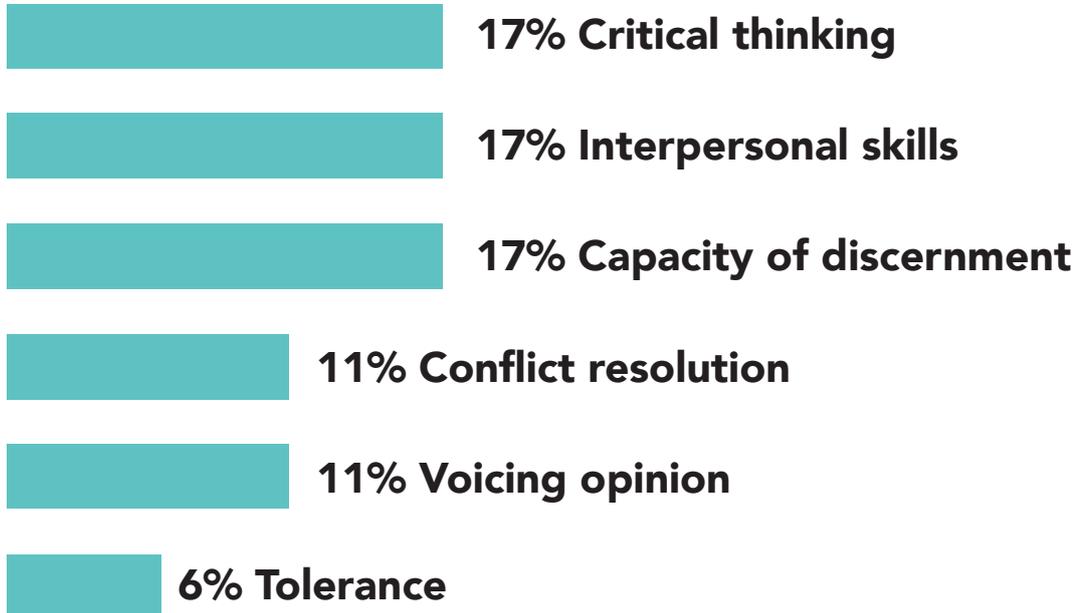
Interpersonal skills are the most important according to teachers, as they mentioned the following in details:



⁵NB : interviewees could give more than one answer.

PARENTS

Parents also mentioned many 21st-century skills that they consider crucial for their children:



A mother told us that sometimes she herself lacks critical thinking and conflict resolution skills, because they could not find a compromise with her husband, leading to the death of her son, infected by dengue fever:

(...) We would have less stress and could have taken my son to a better hospital, and he would not have died because of dengue. We borrowed money, and now we are returning the money (...).

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS TO INTERVIEWEES

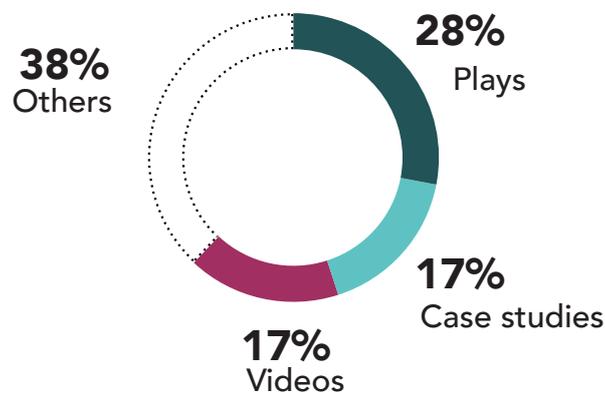
STUDENTS



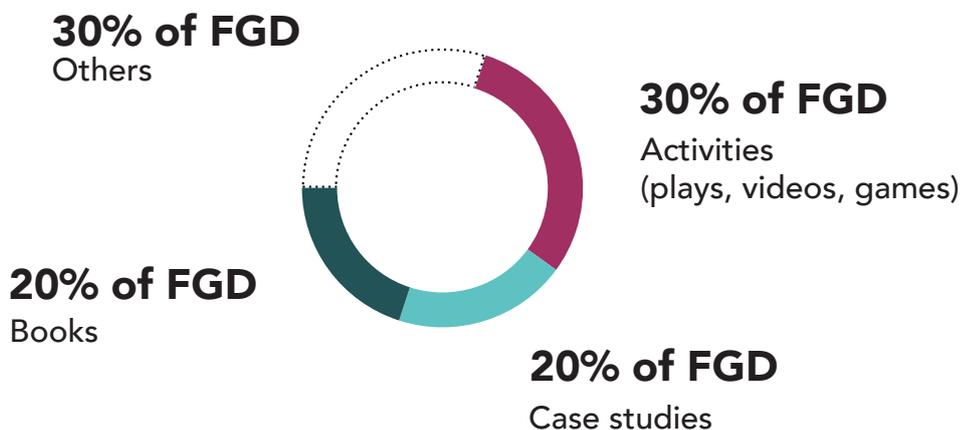
of students responded that it would be more understandable if life skills would be taught separately from other subjects: ***life skills should be a subject and one day in week the teacher can use play or any other technique to teach them.***

When students did not have ideas of teaching means, we gave some examples.

Yes, we should learn these skills as well as the other subjects. I like videos because there are images, but it's also written text.



More learning means were discussed during Focus Group Discussions:



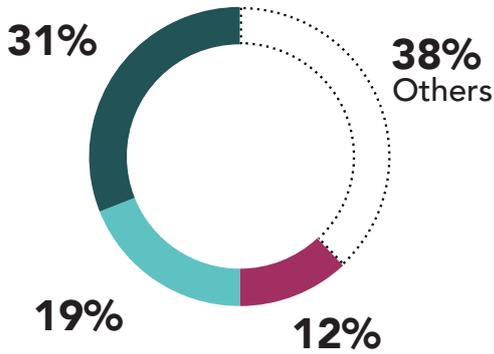
In order to have a broad idea of their existing personal, interpersonal and cognitive skills, we presented them some situations and asked to take a stance. Almost all students showed empathy and collaboration skills. We observed both in classrooms too. The question on tolerance towards Rohingya refugees was a controversial one. As expected, some students did not know who they are, and others answered that they would help them, but some would not, and think that they should go back to their country because they represent a burden.



of students said that learning 21st-century skills at school is essential and exposed different reasons: ***Yes, we should learn them, if they were taught, I would be able to answer and solve problems when facing them.***

TEACHERS

We asked teachers what knowledge they valued most, at first they were sticking to main subjects so we had to reword our question:



31% affirmed that life skills were the most important, including creativity, reasoning, self-confidence, or sense of responsibility, among others, and 19% referred to moral education, while 12% answered in between, pointing at human behaviors and values.



of educators said that 21st-century skills feature in the formal curriculum, while others said that it does not, but some try to discuss them informally.



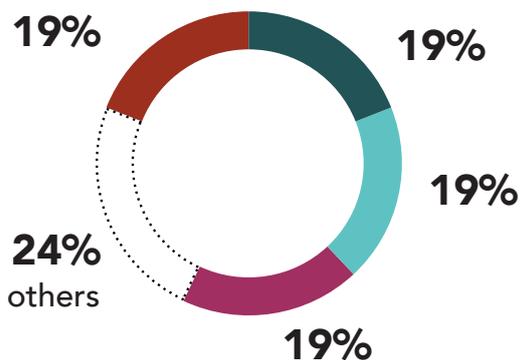
of teachers interviewed answered that they consider life skills as essential for their students.

Reasons for learning them vary from the ability to use them in their practical life, in their future, or simply because they don't learn them at home: **Yes, it's very important, so they know how to live their life. So they can have a nice and successful life. If they confront any challenge, they can face it.**

Teachers' opinions were very split on whether they should teach life skills or whether external participants should do so:

Not the teachers, they won't listen to us. They will be pressured, because they think they will be graded. I think they listen to external people, like you. Because they won't feel pressured. Videos are good for them. Plays and games are also good.

Those who answered that teachers should be in charge, also thought life skills should be taught through existing subjects, whether the ones that preferred external speakers find it more logical to teach them separately from subjects. The latter emphasized on a lack of time and capacity of instructors to transfer this type of knowledge.



Teachers also shared ideas on how the training should be conducted.

They allocated the same importance to videos (19%), plays (19%), activities (19%), and case studies (19%).



For at least 27% of educators, teaching was temporary; some wanted to join better schools (private), or for the majority, it was a step in their career. Three interviewees said that it was either for the salary, the combination with family life, or simply because they had no other option. This informs us on their motivation and potentially, their involvement.

Teaching experience



NGO-run and non-formal school teachers had less than 3 years of experience, against almost 12 years for public school teachers.



This supports the fact that instructors of the first category are often volunteers teaching for a given period only.

PARENTS



33%

33% of parents affirmed that they want their children to get an education and do something with their life because they could not.



17%

A mother from a public school said: *Because we were not able to study, we want their dreams to become true.*

17% also responded that education would make them better persons.



During the FGD, in 50% of schools, parents highlighted the necessity of education so their children can later find a job and be independent.



44% were sure that 21st-century skills were not taught at school, and the others did not know. All agreed on the fact that children should learn these skills at school: *Studying is not enough; these skills are more important; it is important to know how to behave with others and communication skills. One set of skills completes the other.* (Non-formal school student's mother).

In two NGO-run schools, parents made it clear that it was the responsibility of schools to educate children on these capabilities. According to them, they are themselves either illiterate, too busy, or children don't listen to them: *We think that the school has more responsibility because we didn't go to school so cannot educate our children. Sometimes they don't listen to the parents, but listen to other people.* (NGO-run school' parents)

DESIGN CREDITS

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