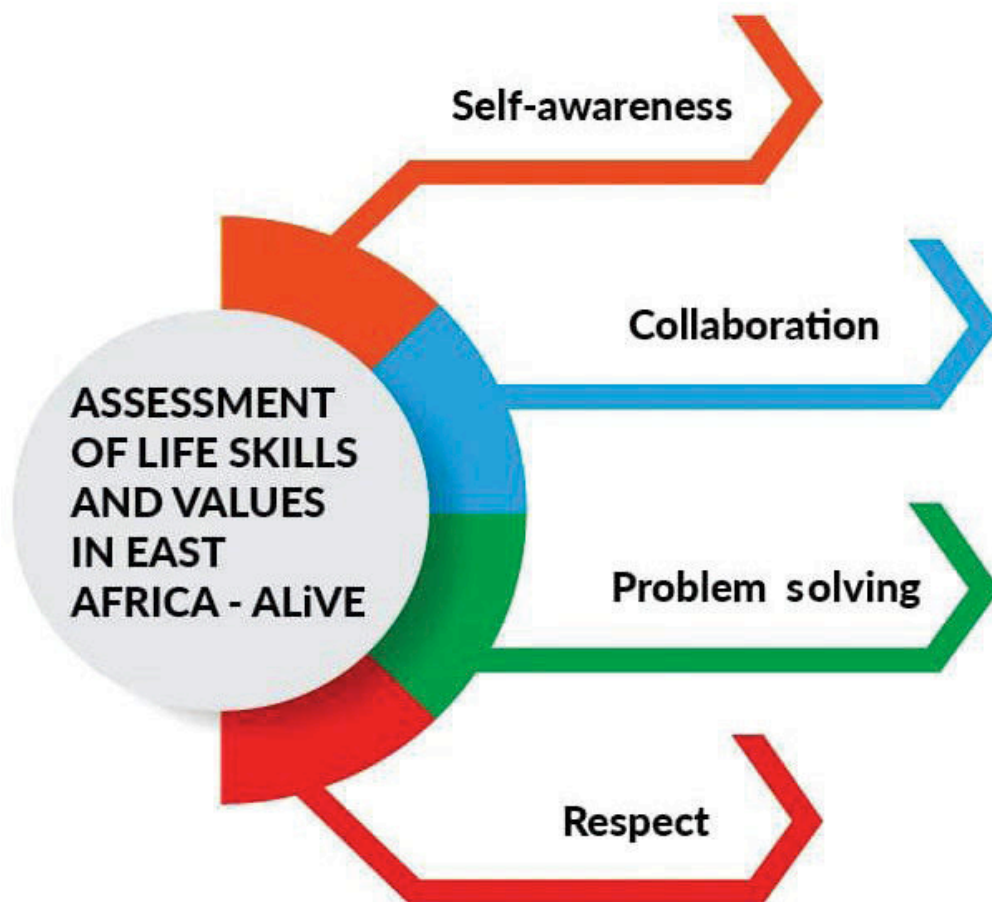


# Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE)

*Proficiency Levels of Adolescents in Life Skills and Values  
in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda*



Summary Report  
JUNE, 2023



## Why Assess Life Skills and Values in East Africa?

The world has become more dynamic and unpredictable as a result of cutting-edge technology and lack of deep reflection at a global level. New political, environmental, and social issues have arisen. To address these issues, the education system must focus on equipping young people with the life skills to navigate and deal with this unpredictable environment.

Education systems are at the forefront of teaching and nurturing life skills and values, and thus they seek to understand the current level of students' competencies. With this knowledge, systems will be able to better plan teaching approaches. The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) launched the Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) project, which has the key objectives of developing a framework to measure life skills (collaboration, problem solving, and self-awareness) and the value of respect. This was intended to provide the needed information about current competencies. Associated goals were to raise awareness of education being a solution to the problems we see around us through increasing the capacities of young people and through strengthening local capacities in assessing and nurturing life skills and values.

## The Tool Development Process

The tool development process took 10 months, from April 2021 to February 2022. An academy of 'learning through doing' was launched, with 47 participants drawn from the Ministries of Education, curriculum development institutes, examinations and assessment institutes, university departments, primary and secondary school teachers, artists, and members of the ALiVE secretariat in the three countries. Through a series of five workshops and two field pilots, the participants engaged in the development and validation of the tools.





## Working Definitions of the Life Skills and Value for Task Development

From a series of contextualisation studies undertaken in 2020 and 2021, researchers explored several life skills and one value in order to understand the perspective of adults and youth throughout Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The results of these studies provided insight into how local populations conceived these human qualities and characteristics, and thus provided relevant information about how they could be conceptualised for measurement.

Collaboration	Problem solving	Self-awareness	Respect
This is the process by which two or more people work together on a common task to achieve shared goals.	This is the process of defining a problem, determining the cause of the problem, finding solutions, and applying the solutions to the problem.	This is the ability to recognize, express, assess, and manage (regulate) emotions from one's own perspective and that of others.	This is the sense of worth and value that one attaches to oneself, someone else, or something.

## Sample Scenario-Based Tasks and Performance-Based Tasks

With clear definitions of the life skills and values to use as frameworks for assessment, the ALIVE team developed scenario-based and performance-based tasks to assess the capacities of adolescents in the region. These assessments were undertaken by Test Administrators reading the tasks aloud to adolescents on a one-to-one basis in households throughout the countries, and observing and recording their responses using an application (KoboCollect) on their phones. A self-awareness task example is shown.

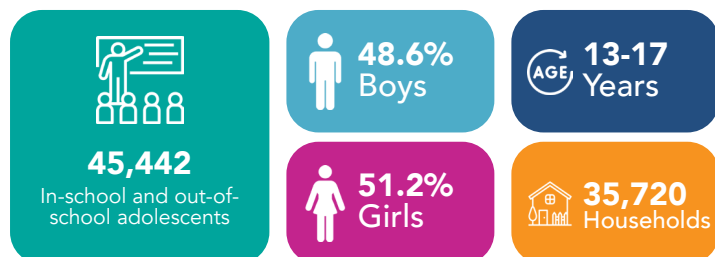


*I'm not a push-over! Or am I!*

You are walking along the road with your friends. Suddenly, a [familiar age mate boy/girl] pushes you over and starts to make fun of you. Your friends also laugh at you for being pushed over.	
How would you react to the one who made you fall?	Each of these items target the adolescent's self-regulation, or self-management, skills; as well as their perspective-taking skills, from slightly different angles, triangulating across the various actors in the scenario.
How would you react to your friends and why?	
What are the different reasons why he/she might have to push you?	

## Who Was Assessed?

45,442 in-school and out-of-school adolescent boys (48.6%) and girls (51.2%) from 13 to 17 years of age, from 35,720 households, 1,991 Enumeration Areas, and 85 districts/counties



Variables	Kenya	Tanzania	Uganda	Zanzibar	Total
Districts/counties	20	34	20	11	85
Enumeration areas	798	673	400	120	1,991
Households	14,161	11,802	7,815	1,942	35,720
Adolescents (problem solving, self-awareness, and respect)	17,276	14,645	11,074	2,447	45,442
Adolescents (collaboration)	7,494	6,827	4,476	1,319	20,116
<b>Tools translated into various local languages</b>	English to Ateso, Borana, Bukusu, Dholuo, Dhophadola, Ekegusii, Gikuyu, Kamba, Kinyala, Kiswahili, Kupsapiiny, Leb Acholi, Leb Lango, Luganda, Lugbarati, Lhukonzo, Lusoga, Maasai, Meru, Nandi, Ng'aturkana, Ngakarimojong, Oluwanga, Orma, Pokomo, Runyankole-Rukiga, Runyoro, Rutooro, and Somali.				

## Key Findings On Adolescents' Life Skills And Values In East Africa



Male and female adolescents performed similarly to each other across all life skills and the value of respect.



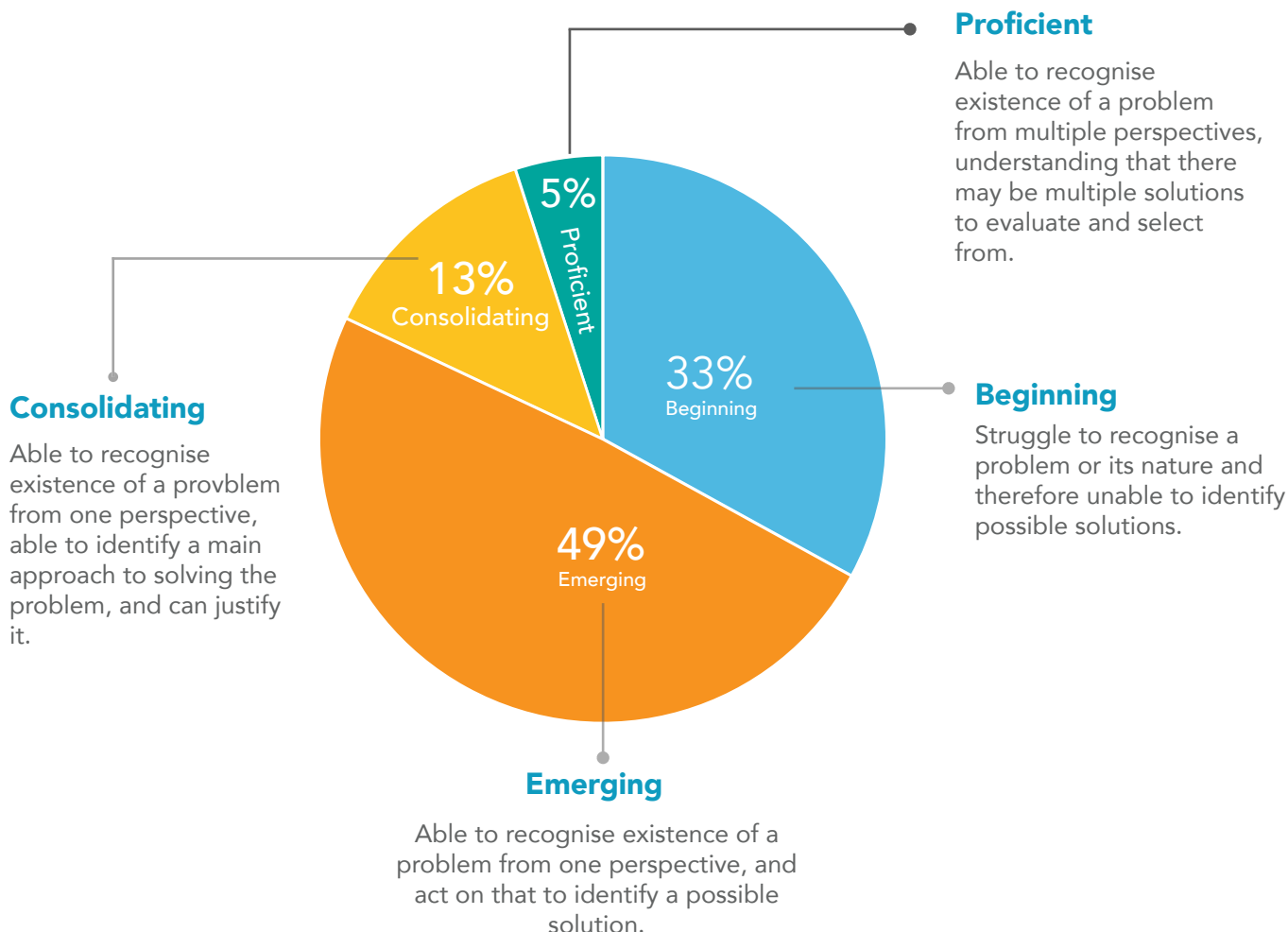
Older adolescents performed at higher levels across all life skills and the value of respect than did younger adolescents.



More educated adolescents performed at higher levels across all life skills and the value of respect than did less educated adolescents.

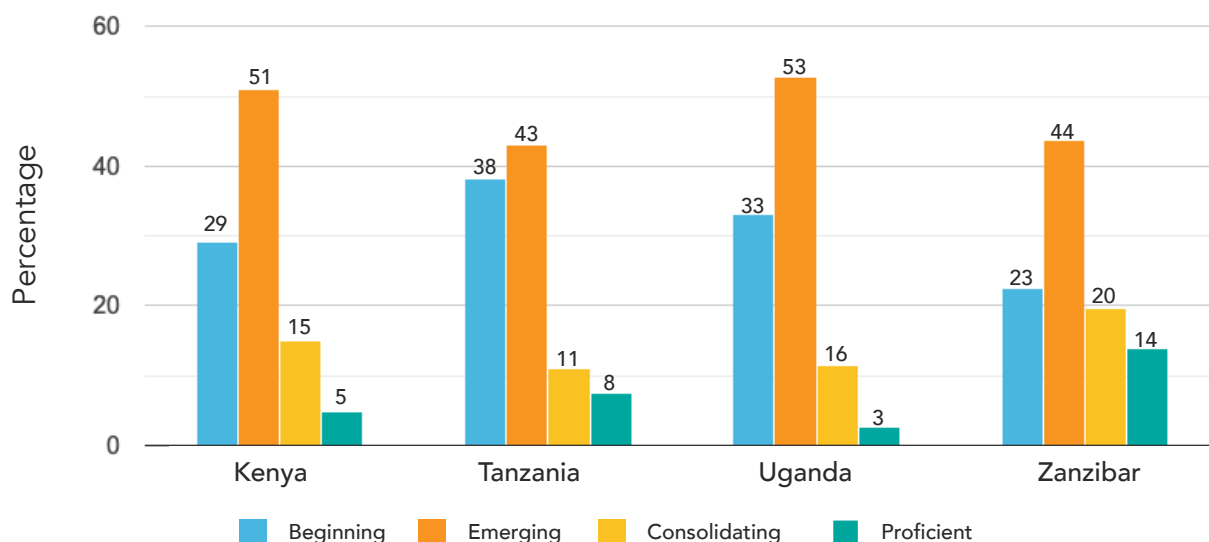
## Findings on Problem Solving

About a third (33%) of the adolescents struggled to recognize a problem and identify possible solutions to it, while nearly half (49%) of the adolescents were able to recognise the existence of a problem from one perspective and act on that in order to identify a possible solution. Relatively few were able to justify solutions or identify multiple approaches to solving a problem.



## Problem-Solving Proficiencies by Jurisdiction

The distributions of problem solving by performance levels across the four jurisdictions are shown below. There is a slight skew in the distribution of the Zanzibar adolescents, with fewer than expected at the beginner level, and more than expected at the proficient level.

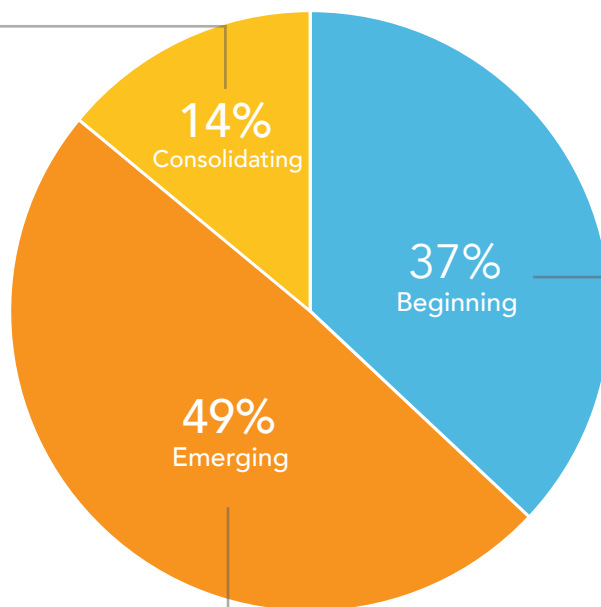


## Findings on Self-Awareness

About 37% of adolescents appear to have little insight into how their emotions control their behaviour and are unaware of how others might feel. The majority (49%) can control their reactions to some degree, while a small proportion (14%) demonstrate the capacity to manage their emotions across a range of situations and to perceive how others might feel and react to these situations.

### Consolidating

Demonstrate the capacity to regulate their emotions across a range of situations, and to perceive and acknowledge how others might perceive and react to these situations.



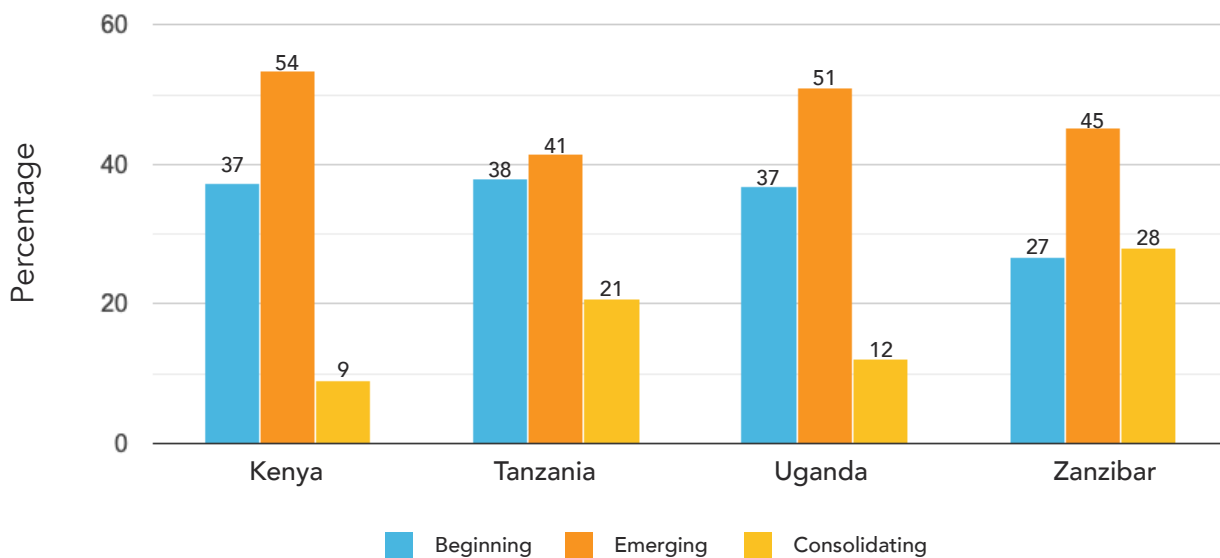
### Beginning

Have little insight into how their emotions control their reactions and seem unaware of how others might feel in difficult situations.

### Emerging

Can control their reactions to some degree and have some insight into the fact that others might see situations differently.

## Self-Awareness Proficiencies by Jurisdiction



The two subskills, self-management and perspective-taking, vary in terms of how difficult they are to demonstrate. Adolescents are more proficient in self-management than perspective taking.

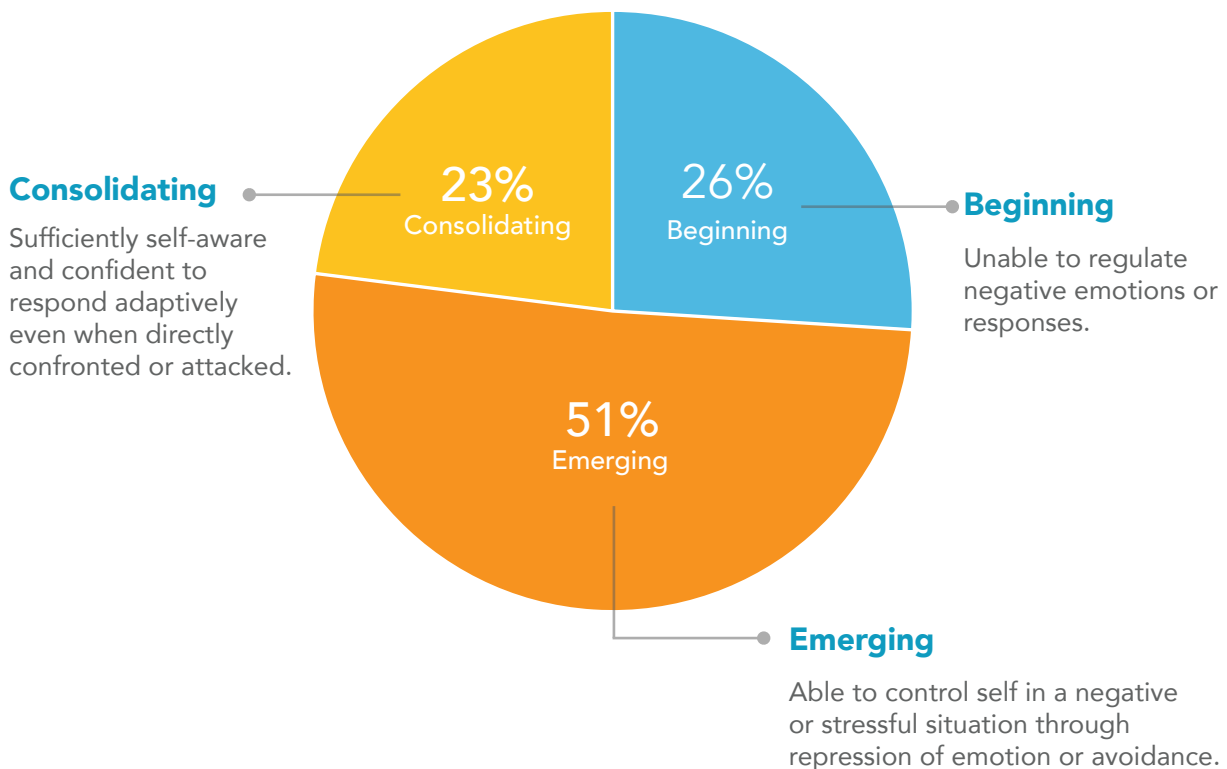
**Self-management** represents an individual's ability to recognize and express emotions, to assess himself or herself, to reflect, and to manage emotions.

**Perspective taking** represents an individual's ability to understand why people behave the way they do towards him or her, to accept feedback, and to recognise his or her impact on and place in family, society, and community.



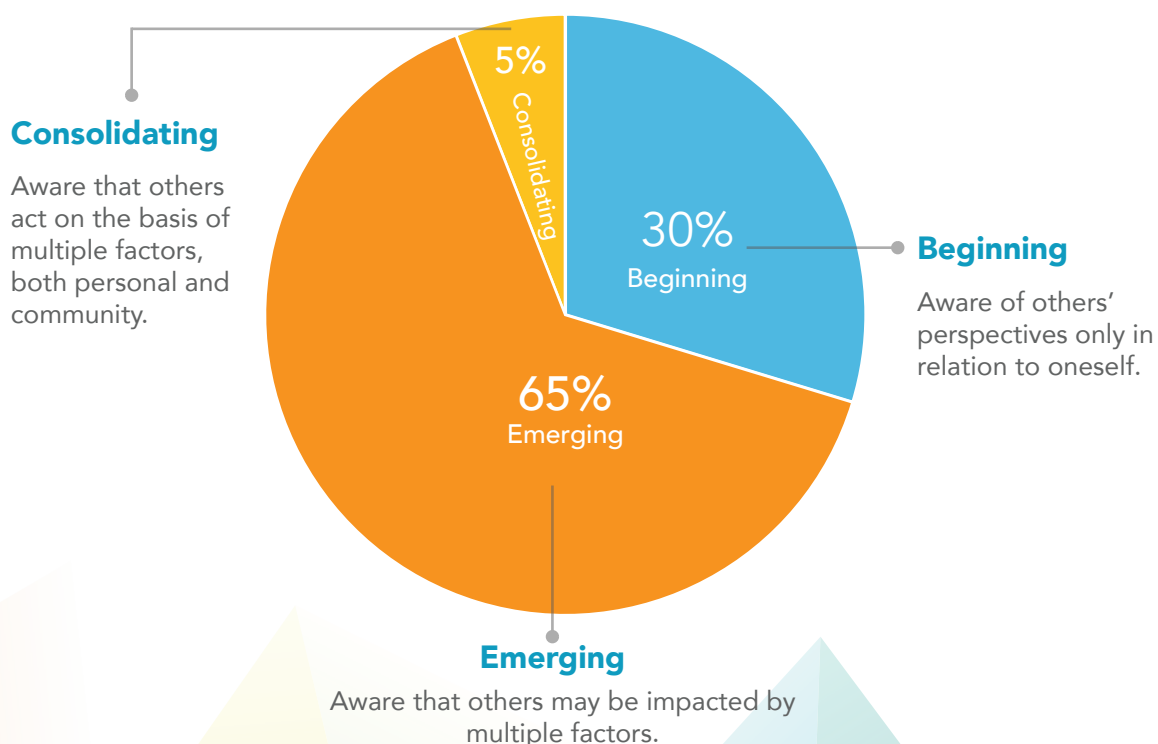
## Self-Management Performance

Most (51%) of the adolescents were able to demonstrate self-control in a negative or stressful situation through repression of emotions or through avoidance. They were less able to respond adaptively when presented with situations in which they might be directly confronted or attacked. About 26% of the adolescents are unable to regulate negative emotions or responses.



## Perspective-Taking Performance

About 5% of the adolescents are aware that others act on the basis of multiple factors, both personal and community-related. Most (65%) of the adolescents were aware that others may be impacted by multiple factors. They were, however, less able to understand how others might see them.



## Findings on Respect

A large proportion of the adolescents were aware of poor behaviour (34%), and able to interpret this as lack of respect for others or self, and as obliging conciliatory steps (50%). But very few (8%) adolescents were aware of links between respect for property and respect for people, and to act in a respectful way towards others and in defence of others and self.

### Proficient

Aware of links between respect for property and respect for person, and will act in a respectful way towards others and in defence of others and self.

### Consolidating

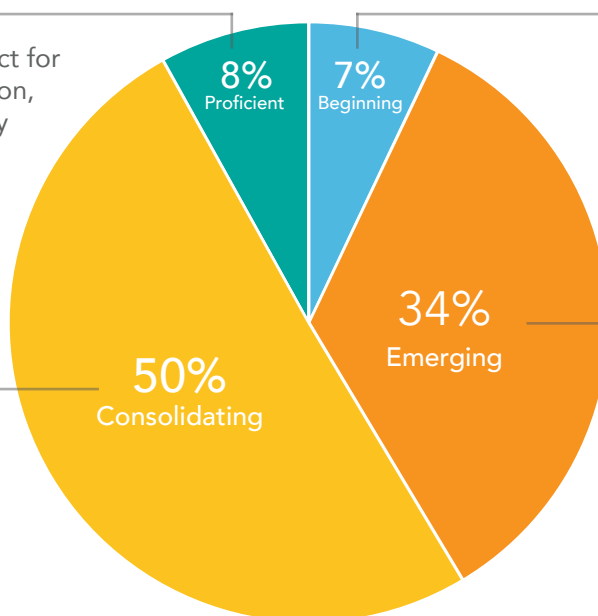
Able to interpret bad behaviour as lack of respect for others or self and may take conciliatory steps to resolve situations.

### Beginning

Aware of others' perspectives only in relation to oneself.

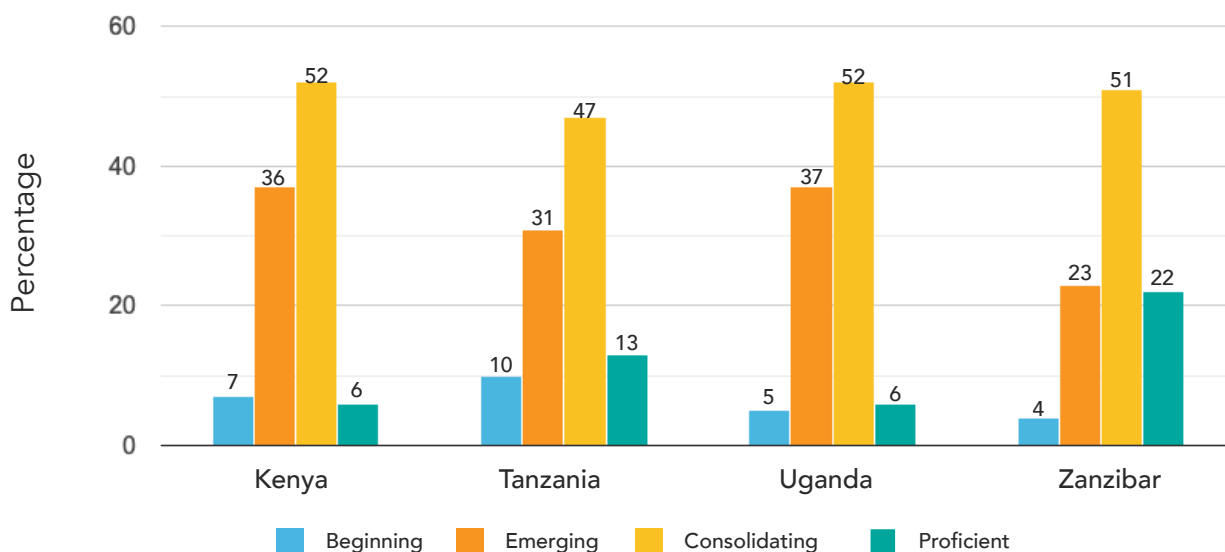
### Emerging

Aware of infringement of rights, or of bad behaviour by one person towards another but does not 'call it out'.



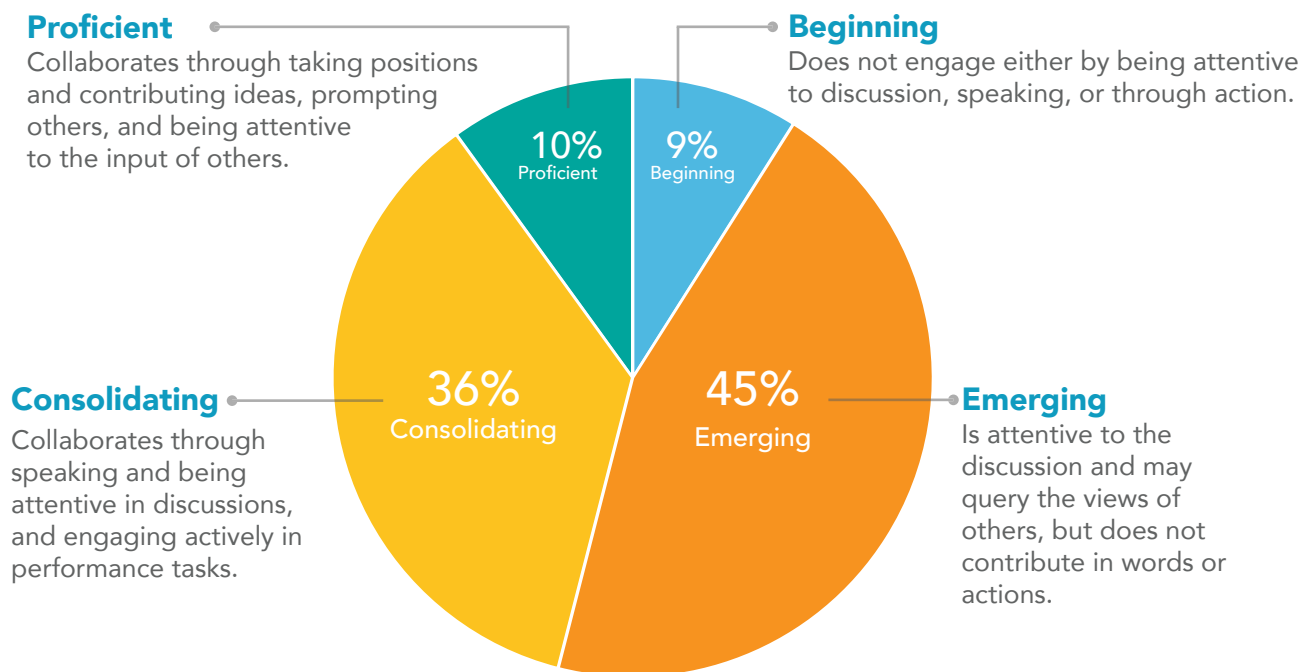
## Respect Proficiencies by Jurisdiction

The distributions of respect by performance levels across the four jurisdictions are shown below. There is a slight skew in the distribution of the Zanzibar adolescents, with more than expected at the higher level.



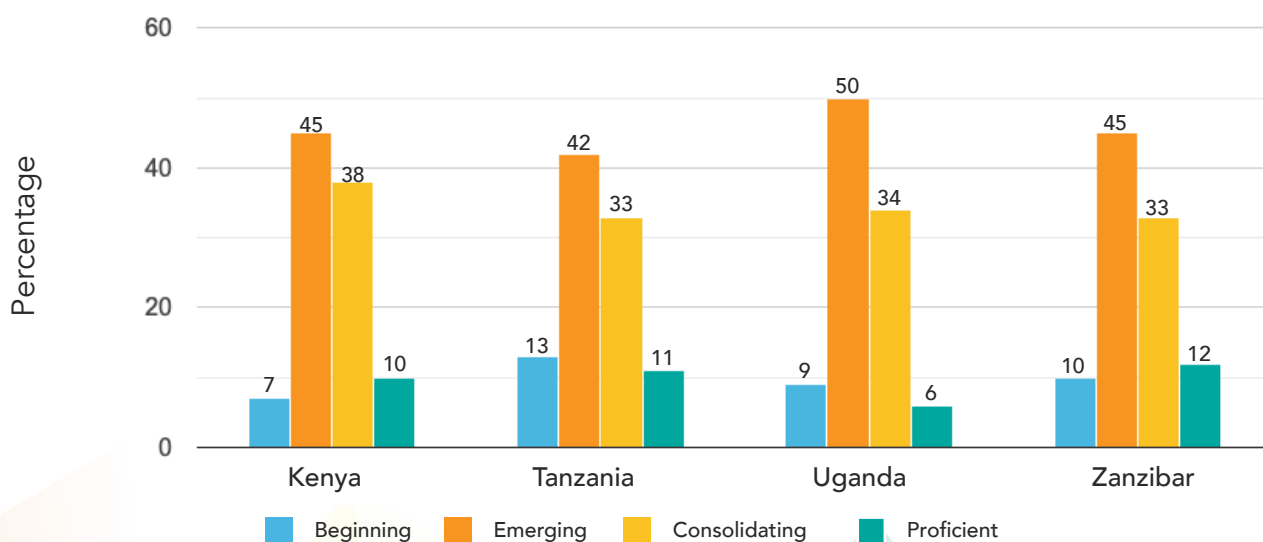
## Findings on Collaboration

A large proportion of the adolescents were attentive to the discussions; they queried the views of others and engaged actively in the performance tasks but did not contribute in words or actions (45%). Relatively few adolescents (10%) collaborated through taking positions and contributing ideas, prompting others, and being attentive to the input of others.



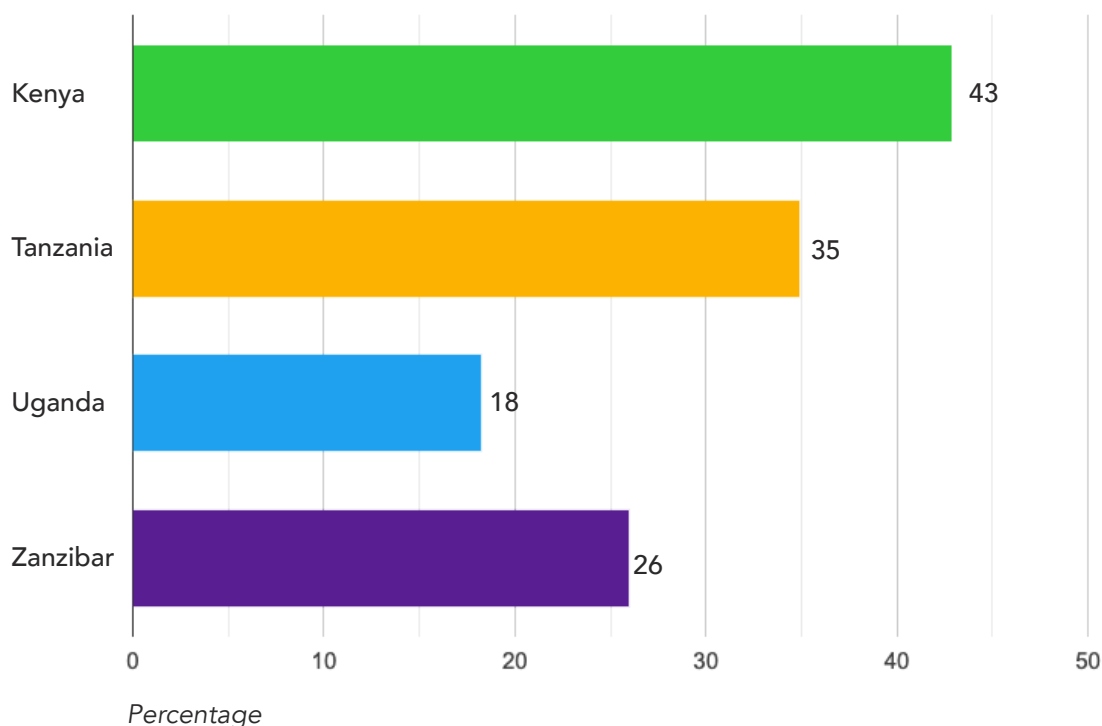
## Collaboration Proficiencies by Jurisdiction

The distributions of collaboration by performance levels across the four jurisdictions are shown below. There is a slight skew in the distribution of the Ugandan adolescents, with fewer than expected at the proficient level, and more than expected with emergent proficiencies.



## Findings on Basic Literacy

Adolescents were asked to read a short text as fluently as they could. Adolescents were categorized as fluent readers if they did not demonstrate any of the following behaviours: stopping or hesitating while reading; reading sentences as a string of words; omitting or skipping the reading of some words or sounds; or replacing words or sounds that they were unable to read. Based on this, 34% of the adolescents (31% males and 36% females) were regarded as fluent readers.



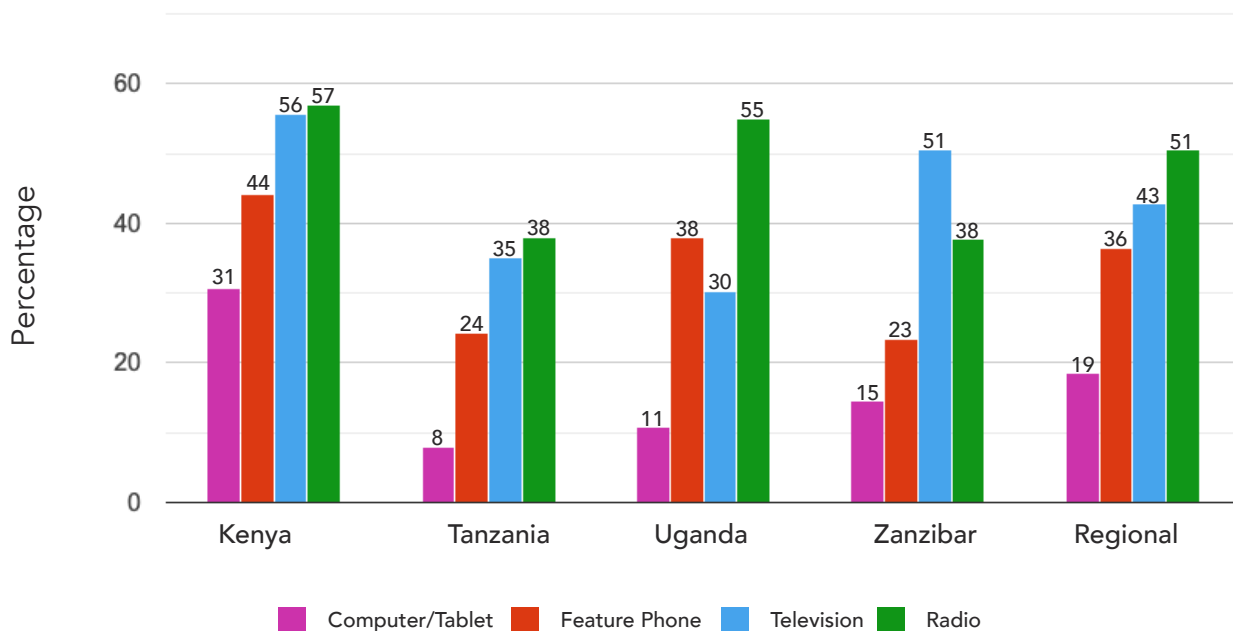
*Adolescents regarded as fluent readers by country*

### Association Between The Life Skills And Basic Literacy

Adolescents who are 'fluent' readers tended to demonstrate higher proficiencies in the life skills (collaboration, problem solving, self-awareness) and the value of respect, compared to those who are 'not fluent' readers.

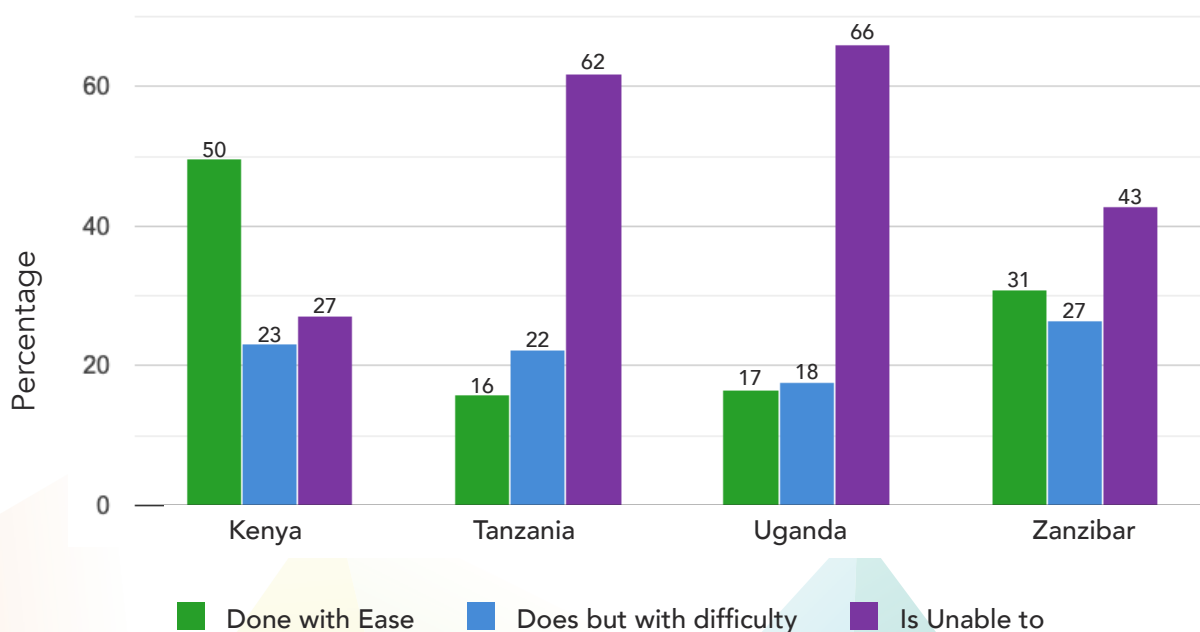
## Findings on Digital Literacy

Adolescents were asked how often they use devices such as computers or tablets, feature phones, televisions, and radios. Adolescents who use the devices either every day or at least once a week but not every day, are considered to be regular users of technology. The use of a computer/tablet is least frequent, and use of a radio is the most frequent.



### Adolescents' Digital Literacy Proficiencies

Each adolescent was given a smartphone or tablet in the assessment session and was asked to access the internet and visit their favourite website. In case of no connectivity, assessors observed and noted whether the adolescent was able to locate an app or click on it. About 31% (32% males and 29% females) of the adolescents were able to do the task with ease. About 48% of the adolescents (47% males and 49% females) were unable to use the technology. The rest were able to locate an app or click on it, but with some difficulty.





## Association between Life Skills and Digital Literacy

Adolescents who are competent in digital literacy tended to demonstrate higher performance in the life skills (problem solving, self-awareness—both self-management and perspective taking—and collaboration) and the value (respect), compared to their counterparts (those completely unable to use the technology or use it, but with difficulty).

## Conclusions and Implications of the Findings

Assessments are used for many purposes, and there is a great deal of variation between actual assessment tools. Information tools vary according to what they are trying to capture, from whom and in what situations, and how the information they generate is to be used.

The ALiVE tools were designed with a very clear vision of what was to be achieved. This vision was the information about how young people would respond to situations that would require their life skills and values. Specifically, the goals were to understand how young people would respond to situations that could be seen as problematic (drawing on their problem-solving skills); how they would respond to negative events that impacted themselves or their community (drawing on their respect for and awareness of self and others); and how they would work together when faced with tasks that would be difficult to complete alone (drawing on collaboration skills).

The value of this information lies in the guidance it can provide about the range of functioning across a large sample of adolescents from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Knowledge of this range provides the roadmap for shepherding adolescents from their current location on the road, or journey, onward through more complex terrains. This knowledge provides information on how increasing levels of proficiency can be integrated into and reflected by curricula, and how additional assessment tasks and tools can be produced which in turn will have the capacity to detect finer degrees of performance.

The current ALiVE tool provides broad brush information about how adolescents can solve problems, respond to challenging events in their communities, and work together. The information is not highly detailed; it currently discriminates between three or four levels of performance to a reliable degree. With further development, this discrimination can be improved in ways that will enable better descriptions of increasing performances, and hence again inform additional permutations of curricular development, and teacher capacity to evaluate student learning needs.

The ALiVE tool is not designed to generate highly descriptive information at the individual level and thus should not be used to evaluate any single adolescent. As the ALiVE program continues to improve its assessment suite through development of additional tasks and piloting of these, in collaboration with education systems, such uses will become viable.



## ALiVE Leaders



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