



## THE UNDERSTANDING OF COLLABORATION IN KENYA, TANZANIA, AND UGANDA

A Report for the Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa  
(ALiVE) Project

**COLLABORATION - KENYA, TANZANIA,  
AND UGANDA**

This report is a product of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI). RELI, through the Values and Life Skills (VaLi) thematic group, aimed to collaborate with local leaders to cocreate and develop contextualized assessments in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The RELI project, Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE), has three main objectives: (a) develop contextualized, open-source tools for the assessment of life skills and values in the East African context; (b) generate large-scale data on life skills and values across the three countries; and (c) use this data to inform change and build capacities within the VaLi-ALiVE member organizations.

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## 1 BACKGROUND

The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI), through the Values and Life Skills (VaLi) thematic group, intends to work with local leaders to cocreate and collaboratively develop contextualized assessments in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The initiative, Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) has three objectives: gathering information (and knowledge), building community, and advocacy. These three broad objectives mirror RELI's three pillars: being a hub for knowledge, transforming member organizations, and influencing policy. Over a period of three years (2020–2023), ALiVE will develop contextualized tools to assess life skills and values in the East African context (with the final products being open-source); generate large-scale data on life skills and values across the three countries; and use this data to (a) inform change and build capacities within the VaLi-ALiVE member organizations, (b) advocate for the three national education systems to focus on and produce these competencies, (c) inform regional policy throughout the East African Community, and (d) inform global thinking on how to measure life skills and values as *relevant and effective* learning outcomes.

ALiVE will be a context-relevant, summative assessment. The assessment will target adolescents from ages 13 through 17 years, both girls and boys, and both in and out of school, focusing on 3 competences and 1 value: self-awareness, problem solving, collaboration, and respect.

The first phase in developing the contextualized assessment tools was to conduct ethnographic interviews at different sites (rural and urban) in the countries. The studies targeted three categories of informants: adolescents, parents, and key persons (people close to the adolescents such as teachers, social workers, youth patrons/matrons in religious communities, etc.) The studies aimed to explore participants' perceptions and understandings of the selected ALiVE competences and value: self-awareness, collaboration, problem solving, and respect.

The aim of phase 1 of the study is to achieve a **contextualized understanding of *collaboration*** skills in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in order to determine the best tools for a large-scale assessment of *collaboration* in the three countries. Therefore, the main scope of this report is to present a comparative analysis of the findings obtained in the individual country reports in order to identify the commonalities and divergences between the three countries.

## 2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- i) What are the common facets of the definitions of *collaboration* skills in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda?

- ii) What are the differences between the definitions of *collaboration* in the three countries?
- iii) What are the most common subskills highlighted by adolescents, parents, and key persons, considering gender and location, in the three countries?
- iv) Which subskills are unique to each country?
- v) What are the common dispositions and values identified by the participants by their categories (adolescents, parents, and key persons), genders, and locations in the three countries?
- vi) Which dispositions, behaviours, and values are unique to each country?
- vii) Which support systems and other factors that help the adolescents to grow in *collaboration* skills are identified in the three countries?
- viii) What are the common methods identified by the participants of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda to assess *collaboration* skills in adolescents?

## 2.2 Methodology

The comparative method was used to prepare this report, paying special attention to gender analyses in the different dimensions and codes analysed. Regarding the study design, a qualitative approach and an ethnographic design were used to explore and collect participants' perceptions and understandings of collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. It was conducted in 5 districts of Kenya (Rongo, Mwea East, Kibra, Narok South, and Tana Delta), 5 in Tanzania (Ilala, Mvomero, Ngorogoro, North-A, and Uyui), and 5 in Uganda (Jinja, Kikuube, Moroto, Kampala, and Oyam), sampled based on their status as rural or urban, their economic activity (pastoralist, core-urban, or agricultural), and their distance from the respective capital cities.

Two villages in each district were randomly sampled. In each sampled village, researchers targeted at least 4 interviews with adolescents (2 of each gender, including those in primary, secondary, vocational training centre, and out of school); 4 interviews with parents (2 of sampled adolescents, and 2 of non-sampled adolescents, including both fathers and mothers); and 4 interviews with key persons (teachers, social workers, and others who consistently work with adolescents, from both genders). This resulted into a target of 24 participants per district for the one-on-one interviews. The total target sample was then approximately 120 participants in each country for the interviews. Given the prevailing challenges, however, the study reached 116 participants in Kenya, 132 participants in Tanzania, and 120 participants in Uganda, for the one-on-one interviews. It should be noted that not all these participants were interviewed on collaboration: Only 75 participants in Kenya, 67 in Tanzania, and 95 in Uganda were interviewed on it.

In addition to the one-on-one interviews, researchers conducted 21 focus group discussions (10 for adolescents and 11 for parents) in Kenya, 20 FGDs (10 for adolescents and 10 for parents) in Tanzania, and 20 FGDs (10 for adolescents and 10 for parents) in Uganda. To

constitute the FGDs, 3 participants in each village (adolescents or parents) were selected to join the other 4 who participated in the interviews. FGDs in each village ultimately consisted of 5 to 7 participants.

### 3 FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Definition of Collaboration

This theme or category relates to the codes and the analysis of the definitions of collaboration as provided by the participants in the three countries.

For this theme (and for subsequent themes), two tables are presented. The first table includes all the aspects (codes) identified in the three countries regardless of frequency. The second table shows what (according to the research team) are the most significant codes for developing a common definition of collaboration as well as the differences in each country. The selected codes in the second table have been mentioned by at least 10% of the participants.

*Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of the Codes Identified in Defining Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda*

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	% <sup>1</sup>	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Working/staying together	59	78.66	64	71.64	64	77.89
Teamwork/cooperation	11	14.66	22	16.41	22	23.15
Sharing	4	5.33	5	7.46	18	18.94
Helping the community	11	13.33	22	32.84	10	10.52
Goal setting	10	13.33	2	2.99		
Relationship skills	10	13.33	6	8.96		
Unity	9	12	21	31.34	7	7.6
Agreement	9	12	5	7.46	5	5.26
Expressive Communication	5	6.66				
Finding solutions	4	5.33				
Love	4	5.33	5	7.46		
Guidance/counselling	3	4				
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Since the participants may have mentioned more than one code in their definition of collaboration, the percentages do not add up to 100. This number has been calculated based on the total number of participants in each country.

Table 2: Frequency of the Definition Codes Mentioned by at Least 10% of the Participants

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	% <sup>2</sup>	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Working/staying together	59	78.66	64	71.64	64	77.89
Teamwork/cooperation	11	14.66	22	16.41	22	23.15
Helping the community	11	13.33	22	32.84	10	10.52
Sharing					18	18.94
Goal setting	10	13.33				
Relationship skills	10	13.33				
Unity	9	12	21	31.34		
Agreement	9	12				
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

The comparison of the codes that appeared in the reports relating to Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda reveals some similarities and differences that are worth analysing. The table above shows that the most common code in all three countries is working together/staying together. This code is very broad because it covers both the dimension of work and that of being together. It recalls all features of community life, which are those of living/being together as well as those of working. That explains why this code has been distinguished from teamwork/cooperation, which is more closely related to work or school settings. Participants used working or staying together to emphasise this communitarian perspective. For this reason, we can observe from T1 that the code goal setting contains a very small number of excerpts. Indeed, collaboration is not a matter of goals, but a matter of community. The skill is not linked to an external purpose or an extrinsic goal. People collaborate because they are together, because they belong to the same community.

The high number of cross-cutting occurrences of helping community and teamwork confirm this communitarian conception of collaboration. Teamwork is also a cross-cutting code that appears with similar occurrences in the three countries, although it is more prominent in the interviews from Uganda. Unity and agreement have fewer excerpts than other codes and are absent from all the countries, but they capture some key aspects of the collaborative process that are relevant to the local definition.

It is important to highlight unity in Tanzania, which appears as an answer to the question regarding a similar term: collaboration. Being collaborative and moving in unity are synonymous according to 31% of respondents. This peculiar occurrence highlights the communitarian conception of collaboration, which appears as a recurrent topic in the definition process.

Finally, goal setting and relationship skills have a few occurrences in Kenya (13%), but not in Tanzania and Uganda. Relationship skills are closely connected to collaboration these skills occur in long-term relationships with others. Only in Kenya, however, did relationship skills emerge as part of the definition. In Uganda and Tanzania, relationship skills only emerged as subskills.

<sup>2</sup> Since the participants may have mentioned more than one code in their definition of collaboration, the percentages do not add up to 100. This number has been calculated based on the total number of participants in each country.



The following table presents a qualitative synthesis in order to identify the commonalities and differences discovered between the definition of collaboration in the three countries.

Table 3: Similarities and Differences in Defining Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

CATEGORY: Definition	DIFFERENCES		
	KENYA	TANZANIA	UGANDA
<b>SIMILARITIES</b>			
<i>Working or staying together</i> appeared as the most important aspect for understanding what collaboration means in the three countries. Even though <i>teamwork or cooperation</i> and <i>sharing and helping community</i> emerge with a lower number of excerpts, they highlight some important aspects of the definition of collaboration.	Importance is attributed to <i>relationships</i> . Several participants define collaboration by referring to <i>finding solutions, relationship skills, and effective communication</i> .	Emphasis is on the <i>volunteer</i> act of collaboration. <i>Unity</i> emerged as a value as well as a condition for collaborating with others. As some participants stated, collaboration is “doing things in unity.”	Relevance was given to the <i>depth of the relationship</i> between those who are collaborating as well as a strong <i>sense of belonging</i> and togetherness.  There was an association with problem-solving skills.

### 3.2 Subskills of Collaboration

The following tables present the list of similarities and differences between the codes identified as collaboration subskills across the three countries. In the context of our study, subskills are understood as the skills that are part of a more complex skill, namely, collaboration.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of the Codes Identified as Subskills of Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Teamwork/cooperation	35	46.66			48	50.52
Relationship skills	28	37.33	12	17.91	49	51.57
Expressive communication	17	22.66	6	8.95	29	30.52
Receptive Communication	20	26.66	9	13.43	30	31.57
Goal setting	15	20	7	10.44	8	8.42
Guidance & Counselling	16	21.33	19	28.35	21	22.10
Planning					3	3.15
Self-confidence	10	13.33			6	6.31
Self-regulation					4	4.21
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

Table 5: Frequency of the Subskills Codes Mentioned by at Least 10% of the Participants

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Relationship skills	28	37.33	12	17.91	49	51.57
Receptive Communication	20	26.66	9	13.43	30	31.57
Guidance & Counselling	16	21.33	19	28.35	21	22.10
Teamwork/cooperation	35	46.66			48	50.52
Expressive communication	17	22.66			29	30.52
Goal setting	15	20	7	10.44		
Self-confidence	10	13.33				
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

Table 4 reports the classification of subskills that emerged from the codes identified during the analysis of the documents in the three countries. This process reveals similarities and differences that highlight some interesting aspects of the contextualized understanding of collaboration. Teamwork is identified as a subskill of collaboration numerous times in Uganda and Kenya (the percentages are close to 50%), but it does not emerge in Tanzania.

On the other hand, relationship skills, communication, and guidance and counselling are identified as cross-cutting subskills in the three countries. The ability to relate adequately, that is, to be expressive and receptive in terms of communication, are identified as relevant subskills for collaboration. In fact, collaborating is something that concerns others or, in other words, the / in relation with other individuals.

*Goal setting* emerged more frequently in Kenya, while the ability to guide others, offer advice, and receive counselling appear in all the three countries as a necessary skillset for collaboration with others.

The relevance of communication is similar to the Western concept of collaboration, which identifies this skill as a subskill of collaboration in various frameworks.<sup>3</sup> It also helps define the characteristics of a good collaborator who needs to be both attentive and approachable through dialogue.

As stated earlier, goal setting is included as a collaboration subskill with a percentage higher than 10% only in Kenya and Tanzania. Considering that goal setting is considered a pillar of collaboration and part of its definition in the scientific literature, it follows that it does not play a key role in this context. This aspect of setting specific objectives and planning seems related to collaboration but is not especially significant. In fact, collaboration is perceived as mutual help in everyday, concrete problems; it is never mentioned as a strategy for preventing a problem or identifying a solution. Collaboration is immediate and spontaneous.

Table 6: Similarities and Differences in Identifying Subskills of Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

CATEGORY: Subskills	DIFFERENCES		
	SIMILARITIES	KENYA	TANZANIA
<p>The key subskills for collaboration with others across the three countries revolve around relationship skills, expressive and receptive communication, and guidance and counselling.</p> <p>Little importance was given to the self-subskills such as self-regulation and self-confidence.</p>	<p>The ability to <i>cooperate or work in teams</i> is the most relevant skill. Collaboration involves the capacity to establish and maintain <i>relationships</i> and the central role of <i>communication</i> for good collaboration.</p> <p>Communication is associated with <i>respect</i>.</p> <p>To be in a relationship with others, it is first necessary to have <i>self-confidence</i>.</p>	<p>Collaborating means, in a certain sense, having the ability to communicate.</p> <p>Clear prevalence of Guidance and Counselling as one of the most relevant subskills of collaboration.</p> <p>Very few cases identified goal setting as a relevant skill.</p> <p>The participants' reference to the subskill of giving/receiving advice is consistent.</p>	<p>The fact of <i>being social</i> is highlighted as one of the most typical aspects of a collaborator.</p> <p>Participants identify both asking for advice and offering <i>guidance</i> as an aspect that can nourish collaboration.</p> <p>Participants mentioned communitarian <i>goal setting</i>, especially <i>planning</i> skills classified as management skills.</p>

<sup>3</sup> For further information, please see the following:  
<http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/63>  
<http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/51>  
<http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/47>  
<http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/57>  
<http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/3>  
<http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/53>

### 3.3 Dispositions and Values

Dispositions can be defined as inherent qualities of mind and character that influence human behaviours. In other words, they are certain aspects of a person's character that help enhance and nurture a skill like collaboration. In our study, the dispositions found while analysing the interviews also related to certain values. For this reason, we combined both dispositions and values in the analyses. The following tables present a comparison of the frequency and percentage of dispositions and values in the three countries. It is important to note that some of the dispositions included in Tables 7 and 8 can also be treated as subskills. In this case, however, we are adhering to the participants' responses during the interviews.

*Table 7: Frequency and Percentage of Codes Identified as Dispositions and Values of Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda*

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Kindness/friendly	17	22.66			26	27.36
Hardworking	9	12	13	19.40	21	22.10
Leadership	19	25.33	18	26.8	14	14.73
Willingness to be advised/corrected			5	7.46	13	13.68
Positive attitude	10	13.33	6	8.95	13	13.68
Passion	4	5.33			6	6.31
Responsibility	14	18.66				
Courageous	7	9.33				
Patience	5	6.66				
Self-actualization	4	5.33				
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

*Table 8: Frequency of the Dispositions Codes Mentioned by at Least 10% of the Participants*

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Hardworking	9	12.00	13	19.40	21	22.10
Leadership	19	25.33	18	26.8	14	14.73
Kindness/friendly	17	22.66			26	27.36
Willingness to be advised/corrected					13	13.68
Positive attitude	10	13.33			13	13.68
Responsibility	14	18.66				
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

Being hardworking and having leadership skills are dispositions that appear uniformly across all three countries where the study was conducted. Positive attitude has a significant number

of excerpts in Kenya and Uganda but not in Tanzania. Similarly, being kind and friendly has a relevant number of excerpts in the same countries. Leadership and positive attitude are dispositions oriented towards others and are in a certain sense based on relationships. Being hardworking, on the other hand, is a disposition of the self and is independent of one's relationship with others.

*Table 9: Similarities and Differences in Identifying Dispositions and Values of Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda*

CATEGORY: Dispositions	DIFFERENCES		
	KENYA	TANZANIA	UGANDA
<b>SIMILARITIES</b>			
Some skills were understood as dispositions as well, i.e., leadership and being hardworking.  Having a positive attitude is associated with being a good collaborator.	Several dispositions are mentioned only in Kenya, highlighting much more variety in the characteristics of a good collaborator. Responsibility has the most consistent number of excerpts.  Giving courage and “mobilising” the group to carry out the task is a typical description of a collaborator.	Being hardworking and leadership are particularly important.  For most participants, hardworking means having an active presence at various levels and being “dedicate[d] to work.”  Leadership means mobilising people and involving others in community issues.	Being hardworking as well as being kind and friendly was mentioned by more women. And leadership was mentioned by more key persons.  Some participants mentioned <i>passion</i> as a personal feature vital for collaboration.  Parents highlight the necessity of a positive and welcoming attitude to collaborate.

### 3.4 Behaviours and Values

During the ethnographic interviews, the participants were asked to identify the characteristics, skills, attitudes, or behaviours observed in a collaborative adolescent.

The following tables (10 and 11) present the frequency and percentage of the most common codes that emerged in the three countries. As can be observed, behaviours and values are combined in the same list and maintained as presented by the participants.



Table 10: Frequency and Percentage of Codes Identified as Behaviours and Values of Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Positive behaviour	59	78.66	57	85.07	60	78.94
Respect	23	30.66	17	25.37	26	34.21
Love	22	29.33	20	29.85	13	17.10
Discipline	10	13.33	12	17.91	14	18.42
Obedience	9	12	17	25.37	13	17.10
Exemplary	4	5.33			8	10.52
Trust/honesty	9	12				
Humility	7	9.33				
Helping the community <sup>4</sup>			22	32.83		
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

In the three countries in which the study was conducted, the cluster *behaviour and values* is the most coherent and homogeneous. Most of the codes are in fact mentioned in all places by the various categories of participants. It is interesting to note how *good conduct* cannot be separated from community values.

First, almost all the participants associate collaboration with good behaviour. This is followed by other values such as respect, which contains percentages between 25 and 35, then love (17–20) and discipline (13–19). Notably, participants in all three countries conceived of collaboration as a system of values and not as a set of strategies to maintain good relationships among group members.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that positive behaviour and helping the community co-occurred in 22 documents and 24 excerpts in the Tanzanian interviews. For this reason, this code was included as an important component of Tanzanian's identification of the behaviours and values necessary for collaboration.

Table 11: Similarities and Differences in Identifying Behaviours and Values of Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

CATEGORY: Behaviours	DIFFERENCES		
	KENYA	TANZANIA	UGANDA
<b>SIMILARITIES</b>			
<p>Having a good behaviour is identified as typical of being a good collaborator.</p> <p>The key values associated with collaborating in the three countries are respect, love, discipline, obedience, and being exemplary.</p>	<p>Being honest and humble are necessary values for a good collaborator.</p> <p>More men mentioned the importance of discipline and honesty, while more women highlighted love.</p>	<p>Helping the community is a value that denotes a good collaborator.</p> <p>Some participants say that being honest is necessary for being a good collaborator.</p>	<p>The similarities of having good behaviour and respect were mentioned more by women than men. Being well behaved means helping others and sharing things like food.</p> <p>Respect seems to be a prerequisite of collaboration—a cornerstone of the local culture and foundation of other values.</p>

### 3.5 Support Systems and Enabling Factors

In regard to the settings or systems that can help adolescents acquire and develop collaboration skills, the main aspects mentioned by the participants in the three countries are presented in the following table.

Table 12: Frequency and Percentage of Codes Identified as Support Systems That Nurture or Enhance Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Family	40	55.33	47	70.14	53	56.38
School	37	49.3	50	74.62	75	79.78
Community /Development partners	17	22.66	30	44.77	38	40.42
Friends /Peers	12	16	8	11.94	47	50.00
Place of worship	17	22.66				
Helping the community			22	29.85		

Sharing		11	16.41		
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	

Most of the codes related to the support systems show similar and consistent percentages and above all, are addressed in all three countries. The family plays a key role in enhancing collaboration. Kenya and Uganda show similar occurrences (above 55%), while in Tanzania the percentage is much higher (70%).

School also plays a fundamental role. Almost 80% of the participants from Uganda and Tanzania mentioned school as a place of learning and collaboration. Community is a recurrent element in the local understanding of the collaboration process and as a support system. This is affirmed by many participants. Each community has networks of friendships and the place of worship, which appear as places where collaboration is exercised because of the group processes typical of them.

Around 30% of Tanzanian participants suggest that helping the community supports collaboration as a good practice. Similarly, 16% of the participants also speak of sharing as a practice that enhances collaboration. As can be noted, in this country, sharing and helping the community are codes that have been used to define collaboration, to describe subskills or dispositions, and as behaviours that enhance collaboration skills in adolescents.

### 3.6 Assessment Methods

During the interviews, the participants were asked to describe the best method for identifying a good collaborator. The most common responses (codes) are presented in Table 13.

*Table 13: Frequency and Percentage of Codes Identified as Methods for Assessing Collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda*

CODES	KENYA (participants)		TANZANIA (participants)		UGANDA (participants)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Observation	28	37.33	27	40.29	32	33.68
Task performance	30	40.00	26	38.80	32	33.68
Staying with people	6	8.00			12	17.91
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>67</b>		<b>95</b>	



As can be observed from the table above, *observation*, *task performance*, and *staying with people* are the common methods identified by participants in the three countries even if specifically *observation* and *task performance* are the most frequently mentioned by far.

It has been recognised (77% of the participants in Kenya, 67% of the participants in Uganda and 79% of the participants in Tanzania) that the best way to analyse whether someone is a collaborative person is to present or assign a task and observe/analyse whether they respond in a collaborative way.

It is interesting to note the implication of the third method highlighted in Kenya and Uganda (*staying with people*), as it introduces one of the most common methods used in qualitative research in the fields of sociology, anthropology, or education. We are referring to the ethnographic approach of conducting research.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The interviews analysed and used to develop this report aimed to investigate how Kenyans, Tanzanians, and Ugandans understand and conceptualize collaboration. The culture, the tradition, and the way of collaborating at the local level highlights specific features of the perception of this skill. This report presents a comparative analysis of the findings obtained in each country.

One of the most relevant results from these analyses is the frequent use of the expression *working together* to define collaboration with no emphasis on work, but on being together in its essence. For the three countries, this being together is inspired by *need* and not by a *goal*. Related to this finding is the frequency with which participants use *teamwork* or *cooperation* as a synonym for *collaboration*.

In addition to these intertwined social and individual components of defining collaboration, we found a cross-cutting presence of some values throughout the findings within three countries. Even if there was no specific question about values, the participants mentioned respect, trust, love, and unity as prerequisites for collaborating with others.

The comparative analysis done between the three countries highlighted some unique features typical of each country.

Tanzania stands out for the importance given to “unity” in the definition of collaboration. It is no coincidence that it emerges precisely when the participants are asked for a synonym of collaboration. Unity therefore falls within the very essence of this skill. In support systems, it is interesting to note that the participants from Tanzania highlight the most operational and practical aspects of collaboration, which are helping the community and sharing.

Kenya, on the other hand, is the only country in which many dispositions are associated with respect, being courageous, being patient, and self-actualization.

Finally, in Uganda, it is interesting to note how the discourse on relationship skills as part of collaboration subskills is fundamental for more than 50% of the participants. Relationships have many components including expressive communication and listening to others. It is interesting to observe, however, that participants believe it is necessary to collaborate with a willingness to remain open to others.

The literature review conducted before this contextualised study led to a general consensus on the definition of collaboration as “working together to achieve a common goal” (Care et al., 2016; Kim & Care, 2020; Lai, 2011; Marek et al., 2015, among others). From the analysis of the interviews, however, the aspect of achieving a common goal is absent or is described otherwise; it is usually not related to the achievement of goals in the workplace but most frequently refers to the achievement of the common good of the participants’ community. Since a person belongs to a certain community, that person is also expected to collaborate with the members of that community: the purpose is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It should be noted that the definitions that emerged in the interviews connect with the etymological meaning of collaboration. Collaboration comes from a Latin root *com and laborare*, meaning *to work together*. Similarly, Ofstedal and Dahlberg (2009) assert that “people who practice true collaboration create a shared vision with joint strategies when working on a problem, issue or goal” (p. 38).

Therefore, it is important to highlight that collaboration is not only practiced because of the existence of a common goal, but in many cases, it is understood as the common way of living together while sharing experiences or helping in the community. It does not assume the purpose or the need to collaborate but is a way of conceiving of oneself in relation with the community.

The most relevant conclusion about the contextualised understanding of collaboration in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda is probably the Sense of Community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) or sense of belonging found in most of the definitions, explanations, and characterisations of a collaborative person and his values. Collaboration is not reduced to accomplishing tasks in school or work settings but a way of living and conceiving of ourselves. This awareness was reflected in the interviews through the following expressions: working with others, togetherness, helping community, sharing, unity, etc.

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