

## Learning to Live, Learning to Earn: Home and School Curricula in Dialogue

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Keywords	Abstract
Home Curriculum, Learning to Live, Learning to Earn, Live Experience, School Curriculum.	<i>This study explores the relationship between home and school curricula regarding learning to live and learning to earn. Education is a transformative process that supports the holistic development of students. Home and school are the two major spaces of learning, but the problem is that these are unbridged in terms of living and earning. This study is grounded in a qualitative approach, interpretative paradigm, and autoethnographic research design. The study employs researchers' lived experiences alongside broader socio-cultural realities. Information was generated through narrative reflections and lived experiences and was analyzed by thematic analysis and theoretical interpretation techniques. The findings reveal that the home provides life-oriented competencies among children, such as cooperation, empathy, self-reliance, responsibility, and many more, through experiential learning and lived experiences. On the other hand, schools provide theoretical and rigid knowledge through a structured curriculum. The disconnection between home and school curricula has been creating confusion and disadjustment among students. The research concludes that the gap between home and school curricula creates many problems in the holistic educational system regarding living and earning. This research paper suggests that the need for an integrated and context-responsive curriculum that can bridge the home and school curricula regarding living and earning.</i>

### INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a transformative process that holds the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences of an individual (Cranton & Taylor, 2011). I have acquired many experiences regarding learning to live and learning to earn from childhood to the present. These types of experiences have been shaped within the home and the formal schooling system. During my childhood, my home taught me about how to live, while the formal schooling guided me about livelihood skills. However, the home and school taught me about earning. These are directly associated with my present life. This reflects that home and school education are key aspects of living and earning. Living and earning are similar and interrelated. Especially, home education focuses on living, and school education focuses on earning. These are the research assumptions that motivated me for this study.

In the present time, most dimensions of life revolve around living and earning. These types of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences I have gained through my own home environment and formal schooling. I have been focusing on living and earning for my children in a home environment, and I expect from formal schooling. This is not only a personal perspective; it reflects a broader social reality. Many parents expect that learning should be directly associated

with living and earning in contemporary society. Individuals who are able to manage their lives effectively and earn well are often regarded as successful and respectable in society. In this regard, my own childhood experiences and my personal reflections on society have collectively inspired me to undertake this research work.

The concepts of ‘learning to live’ and ‘learning to earn’ reflect the fundamental dimensions of education that are directly associated with an individual's real-life situations. The history of education shows that education has primarily focused on the cultivation of children. Ancient Western Greek and Roman education was based on home education, in which the father taught his son about family responsibilities and the mother taught her children about household work (French, 2002). Similarly, ancient Eastern education was based on the Gurukul system, in which Gurus provided education for their students’ holistic development, including moral, social, and financial aspects (Bhat & Javaid, 2024). These reflect that the ancient education system was based on the living and earning of children. The present society also expects these dimensions through home and school education.

Even though both home and school play a crucial role in shaping how children grow and learn, the lessons they teach can often be quite different. They tend to focus on varying knowledge, values, and skills that are important for living and making a living. From the beginning to now, the intellectual community has been advancing the concept of curriculum as part of formal schooling. But I have generated an argument about curriculum beyond formal schooling. This argument pushed me to explore home curricula regarding learning and living. This idea is novel, but it will be contributed to a paradigm shift regarding the concept of curriculum. Traditionally, we have been practicing curriculum as a part of formal schooling regarding livelihood, but we should go to home curricula in terms of living and earning. This is a more crucial idea regarding the broader sense of education and curriculum. The ideas of home curriculum come from the homeschooling concept of Western society (Wang & Langager, 2023). Not only this, but the intellectual community believes in “home is the first school of children”; this argument supports the concept of a home curriculum.

Schools often prioritize structured and rigid curricula, transmission of theoretical knowledge, and exam-oriented learning (Ghaleb, 2024). On the other hand, the home emphasizes practical life skills, experiential learning, hands-on practices, cultural values, and survival strategies (Dulal & Mu, 2023). Both spaces of learning are most necessary for the holistic development of an individual. But the problem is that these are unbridged. Much academic research shows that parents are dissatisfied with school education because it has become underutilized (Friedman et al., 2006). They are suffering from a lack of motivation from formal schooling regarding living and earning. In the context of Nepal, traditional and indigenous knowledge systems and home-based learning play a crucial role in shaping children’s competencies for daily living and earning; these aspects are rarely disconnected from formal school curricula. In this situation, the problem is that students are academically sound but far from essential life and livelihood skills. This reflects that school education tries to provide theoretical knowledge (Cheng et al., 2012), whereas home education contributes skills-based education (Ali, 2025).

This study tries to explore the relationship between home and school curricula regarding living and earning. Likewise, the study explores how life skills (learning to live) and livelihood skills (learning to earn) are developed across these contexts. The research findings have suggested

ways of bridging the gap between home and school curricula for more integrated learning in terms of living and earning. This study generates knowledge about redesigning formal schooling for relevance and applicability in real-life contexts. The study also holds practical implications for stakeholders and concerns people by providing insights about bridging the gap between home and school education, such as theory and practice, or school and life.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Thematic Literature Review**

Based on existing studies, I have reviewed and organized some key themes that support this research work.

**Home as a Site of Life-Oriented Learning:** Home is the first school of children (Rosenbury, 2006). A substantial body of literature recognizes that home is the primary site for acquiring life skills such as daily routines, household chores, social relationships, adopting family traditions, moral values, cooperation, family responsibility, and many more. Parents take primary responsibility for their children in the transmission of life-oriented learning. Children acquire different types of learning experiences through imitation, observation, and practice in the home environment. Children learn most of their life skills in the home environment, which supports their life span (Väisänen & Hirsto, 2020). This form of learning is largely informal, flexible, child-centered, action-oriented, experiential, implicit, and explicit. It contributes to learning for living in the context of real-life situations.

**School as a Site of Formal Learning:** Schools are primarily designed to deliver structured, standardized, predetermined, theoretical, and rigid knowledge (Au, 2011). This education focuses on academic achievement, exam performance, and certification. Formal rules and regulations are followed by formal schooling, which supports further education and livelihood. Schools aim to prepare students for employment, which supports learning to earn. Many academic studies highlight the gap between school education and real-life applications (Fantinelli et al., 2024), particularly in developing countries like Nepal.

**Rigid School Curricula Vs Flexible Home Curricula:** Schools have been following rigid curricula for a long time (Priestley, 2011), while the home has been practicing flexible curricula beginning with the formation of human society. The family traditions, cultural values, moral values, household chores, family relationships, and responsibilities belong in home curricula. On the other hand, transmission of theoretical knowledge belongs in school curricula. The rigid school curricula neglect the needs and interests of students (Milner, 2013). This creates low motivation among students and creates a high dropout rate in the schooling system. On the contrary, home has its own curricula, which are developed by parents, but they are so flexible that children can change them based on their own needs and interests. The flexible position of home curricula can give opportunities for hands-on practices and lived experiences.

**Learning for Livelihood and Skills Development:** The academic research on livelihood education emphasizes the importance of skill-based learning (Bhattarai, 2024). The skill-based learning focuses on vocational education and the practical competencies of an individual. The formal schooling system provides selected skills based on the structured curriculum (Litzelman

& Cottingham, 2007). On the other hand, home environments provide vocational exposure to children, such as agriculture, trade, home management, construction, and many more. These two domains of learning should bridge the gap between ‘learning for living’ and ‘learning for earning.’

**The Gap Between Home and School Curricula:** The school curricula were traditionally introduced after the establishment of formal schooling. On the other hand, the concept of home curriculum is an evolving idea in contemporary society. Much academic research shows that the school curriculum is rigid, structured, predetermined, formal, teacher-oriented, explicit, and many more things (Byers et al., 2018). On the other hand, the home curriculum is informal, flexible, emerging, based on family tradition and culture, parent-centered, explicit, and implicit in nature. There is a huge gap between home and school curricula regarding learning for living, such as a disconnect between academic knowledge and lived practices, a lack of contextualization in school curricula, the marginalization of indigenous and local knowledge systems, and many more. Not only this, but many other gaps are under-visualized. This research work tries to explore many hidden gaps between home and school curricula regarding learning for living and earning.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The concepts of ‘learning to live’ and ‘learning to earn’ can be theoretically grounded within educational philosophies and learning theories. This study draws on multiple theoretical perspectives, which are given below.

**Constructivist Learning Theory:** Constructivist learning theory was developed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky in the field of learning theory and philosophy. This theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through social interactions and cultural assimilation. In the context of the home environment, children acquire knowledge through interactions with parents and siblings. They reconstruct their own knowledge based on ZPD and scaffolding (Verenikina, 2003). On the other hand, schools often provide structured, rigid, formal, and theoretical knowledge. This theory supports home education rather than school education. The concept of learning to live and learning to earn is directly associated with constructivist learning theory.

**Experiential Learning Theory:** Experiential learning theory was proposed by David Kolb in the field of cognitive learning psychology. This theory emphasizes learning through experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. It is associated with home learning, where children learn through household responsibilities, imitation of family traditions, social roles, cultural practices, and mutual relationships with family members. This helps children with their learning for living. On the other hand, school often emphasizes abstract knowledge, rigid rules and regulations, structured curricula, and exam-oriented learning experiences. Sometimes, this is limited in practical applications. Kolb’s theory of learning suggests that effective learning requires a balance between lived experience and formal instruction (Kolb, 2014). This reflects that it is necessary to bridge home and school curricula for effective learning, which can help with learning to live and earn.

**Social Learning Theory:** Social learning theory was developed by Bandura, A. (1977) in the field of learning psychology. This theory states that children learn through observation,

imitation, and modeling in group activities and social relationships. Children observe parents' and community members' life skills, work ethics, and cultural norms, and they get learning experiences. In the school environment, students observe teachers' and peers' academic and professional behaviors and get such types of learning experiences. This theory highlights that both the home and school environments are critical in shaping competencies related to living and earning. This reflects the importance of bridging home and school curricula in terms of learning for living.

**UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education:** The concept of the four pillars of education was formally introduced by UNESCO. The UNESCO framework provides a comprehensive vision of education, which emphasizes that learning should be beyond academic achievement (Elfert, 2017). UNESCO suggests that Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, and Learning to Live Together are the four pillars of education. These four pillars of education should be the core foundation of formal schooling. Based on these perspectives, formal schooling especially focuses on learning to know and learning to be. On the other hand, home education promotes Learning to Do and Learning to Live Together. This research work tries to find out the importance of the four pillars of education in terms of living and earning between the home and school curriculum. Likewise, the research paper builds upon this theoretical foundation to explore bridging the gap between home and school curricula.

## **Research Gaps**

After the thematic and theoretical review, I have identified some research gaps in this research work, which are given below.

**Lack of Integrated Understanding Between 'Learning to Live' and 'Learning to Earn':** Existing literature discusses how home and school are separate sites of learning, such as home as a site of life-oriented learning and school as a site of livelihood-oriented learning. In this context, there is a lack of integrative studies that examine how these two sites of learning interact, overlap, or can be meaningfully connected. This reflects that the dialogue between living and earning remains conceptually acknowledged but empirically unexplored.

**Limited Empirical Evidence on Home-School Curriculum Dialogue:** Some academic research highlights the gap between home and school education (Blandin, 2017), but there is a lack of empirical evidence in this field. In this research paper, I have tried to explore the gap experienced by parents and children and also as a researcher. This research work tries to explore practical ways to bridge these two curricula in a real-life context, aligning with learning for life and earning. Previous studies remain descriptive rather than transformative.

**Underrepresentation of Local and Indigenous Knowledge:** Most of the academic research has focused on the school curriculum, which is centered on modern-global knowledge. Few studies have tried to explore local and indigenous knowledge within the home environment. There is limited research on how home-based local and indigenous knowledge can be integrated into formal schooling. This study has tried to explore local and indigenous knowledge within the home curriculum and tries to connect with the school curriculum by generating new ideas.

**Neglect of Learners' Lived Experiences:** Most of the literature focused on the policy of education, curriculum development and implementation, pedagogy, evaluation, drop-out, and many other topics. These studies pay less attention to students' lived experiences. I have tried to explore students' lived experiences regarding learning for living and earning in this research work.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study has been conducted through a qualitative research approach and interpretative research paradigm. These assume that reality is socially constructed and shaped through the lived experiences of an individual. It is grounded on an auto-ethnographic research design, which enables the researcher to position his lived experiences as primary information. It also analyzes personal experiences in relation to broader socio-cultural contexts (Rybicki-Newman, 2024). The study draws upon the researcher's childhood experiences, educational journey, professional experiences, and parental role as sources of information regarding home and school curricula. These experiences were purposively selected based on their relevance regarding learning for living and learning for earning. The self-reflections of the researcher in terms of learning for living and earning play a vital role in generating firsthand information. The information was generated through narrative writing, reflective practice, memory work, and contextual observation. The use of multiple sources of self-reflection enhanced the richness and depth of information. This study employs pragmatic ontology, relational epistemology, and value-laden axiology as philosophical lenses. The information was analyzed by thematic analysis and theoretical interpretation techniques. Finally, findings were presented through narrative representation supported by theoretical interpretation. Since this study is all about personal experiences, I really need to keep ethical considerations front and center. It's crucial to explain how I have anonymized individuals, locations, and any sensitive information to ensure everyone's privacy and confidentiality are respected. Formulation with information, coding, them development, interpretation, and narrative representation has been used for analysis and interpretation. First, I became familiar with information; then intital codes are generated by highlighting meaningful words and ideas. After that, I reviewed and refined the coding and decoding information. Then, I defined and named each theme clearly. Finally, the findings were written up, linking with the research objectives and questions. The themes have developed from the information. I have adopted reflectivity in acknowledging research bias and thick description of context for trustworthiness. While the study is grounded in the researcher's personal experiences, its purpose is not to generalize findings. The findings of the research contribute to broader discussion on the relationship between home and school curricula regarding learning for living and earning.

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INFORMATION**

The analysis of this study is grounded in a qualitative approach and an autoethnographic design. I have critically examined my own lived experiences alongside broader socio-cultural realities. Thematic analysis and theoritical interperatation have been used in this research paper, which are given below.

**Home as a Fundament Space for Learning to Live:** I have experienced that the home environment plays a vital role in cultivating life-oriented competencies among children. I had learned different types of life skills from my home environment in my childhood, such as household responsibilities, social interactions, family ethics, cooperation, empathy, and self-

reliance. These types of learning are largely experiential, informal, implicit, need-based, and contextually grounded. These reflect that 'Learning to Live' is not formally taught but is deeply rooted in lived experience (Patel, 2021), which aligns with the interpretative lens. I experienced that the home curriculum provides hands-on learning opportunities and lived experience through observation, imitation, and working culture. This aligns with constructivist and social learning assumptions, where knowledge is co-constructed through social relationships and family traditions (Braithwaite et al., 2017). This helps the living status of an individual, which helps them in social adjustment.

. My father did not have a formal education, but he survived through his life skills, which he learned from his home environment. This reflects that the home curriculum is enough for living without formal schooling. This aligns with the ancient Eastern and Western education systems. Father taught his son about household responsibilities, and Mother taught her daughter about household work in ancient societies (Kraemer, 1991). Until now, parents have been responsible for the transformation of the life skills of their children. Similarly, I have been teaching my children since their childhood about household responsibilities. This makes their lives stronger.

**School as a Structured Space for Learning to Earn:** My personal experience shows that formal education is required for employment and self-employment. When I joined school, my teacher always focused on me for the job. They told me, "*You are a talented student, so you became a lecturer.*" This reflects that the school environment always focuses on learning to earn as well as on lives. This analysis shows that formal schooling primarily emphasizes 'learning to earn' through structured curricula, rigid knowledge, and exam-oriented pedagogy. People expect that formal schooling is able to prepare students for further employment. I experienced that parents expect their children to be capable of earning an income after acquiring formal education. Not only that, but students themselves also believe that formal education should help them to earn money.

My childhood experiences and personal reflections indicate that school learning is abstract, structured, theoretical, and rigid, which helps only for a job without practical applications. It is detached from everyday realities. Formal education has been supporting me in professional life rather than in daily life. The perception of parents is not good about formal schooling regarding its real-life applications. Some academic research highlights that formal schooling prepares human resources for employment in the public and private sectors (Boyne et al., 1999). This indicates that formal schooling is a space for preparing individuals to earn money through any employment and self-employment.

**The Disconnection Between Living and Earning:** This refers to the growing gap between everyday life experiences and the formal ways people generate income. Individuals often struggle to connect what they learn in daily life with meaningful livelihood opportunities. Earning is an essential part of living. If these are unbridged positions, people do not get good opportunities in their livelihood. I experienced that home and school operate parallel systems of learning rather than an integrated space of learning. This disconnection creates confusion, tensions, and problems of adjustment among students, such as being academically strong but struggle with practical life competencies. I belong to a middle-class family, and I learned life skills from my home environment. Home curriculum focuses on living-related competencies such as working culture, ability of adjustment, cooperation, coordination, moral ethics, and many more. On the other hand, school curriculum emphasis on professional-related competencies such

as competition, the thought of individualization, and many more. My home learning experiences have been helping me for life-related adjustment. On the other hand, school education has been helping me with earning-related adjustment. This reflects that there is a huge gap between home and school curricula in terms of living and earning.

This aligns with experiential learning theory, which highlights that learning is based on hands-on practices and lived experiences. But I experienced that home learning is based on lived experiences, and school learning is based on the transformation of rigid knowledge. This absence of integration leads to tension among parents and children. They expect education to be relevant to living and earning. In this regard, pragmatic philosophy stated that education is life itself rather than preparation for life (Neiman, 2013). I experienced this gap in my own personal and professional context, where indigenous knowledge and cultural practices within the home are often excluded from school curricula. This reflects that the home curriculum is stronger regarding learning for living rather than the school curriculum.

**Rigid School Curricula Vs Flexible Home Curricula:** My childhood experiences and professional reflections show that school curricula are more rigorous, structured, and predetermined. I never got opportunities to explore my own interests in the school curriculum. On the other hand, home curricula are designed more flexibly. When I was a child, I could do interest-based activities in my home environment. I could learn according to my needs and interests in a home environment during my childhood, but at that time, teachers guided me through schooling under strict curriculum guidelines. Nowadays, my children can work out based on their own interests in my home, but I guide my students through a formal curriculum. This reflects that the home curriculum is more flexible than the school curriculum. Children freely engaged in home learning without any hesitation, but they felt bored with school learning. However, the rigidity of school curricula often neglects students' personal needs, interests, local context, and lived experiences, which leads to decreased motivation among students. This reflects that flexible home curricula support learning to live, and rigid school curricula support learning to earn.

**Underutilization of Local and Indigenous Knowledge:** I experienced that the home environment provides the opportunity for local and indigenous knowledge, such as the use of herbal medicine, the traditional healing system, the use of cow urine for purification, the use of mud for hand washing, and many more. I have been using these types of indigenous knowledge in my life since my childhood until now. On the other hand, the school curricula neglect these types of local and indigenous knowledge. In this regard, parents are dissatisfied because they practice these types of knowledge in the home environment, but children are avoiding them day by day due to formal schooling.

Despite its importance, school curricula did not legitimize indigenous and local home knowledge. School curricula tend to prioritize modern global knowledge rather than indigenous home knowledge. This creates an epistemological imbalance where local and indigenous knowledge is undervalued. My personal and professional experiences reflect that the home practices of local and indigenous knowledge support daily living and earning for children in the context of Nepal.

**Towards Bridging Home and School Curricula:** My lived experiences and professional reflections show that it is necessary to bridge home and school curricula in terms of living and earning. In my professional experiences, the perceptions of parents and students reflect that

school curricula are not sufficient for the holistic development of children. Parents taught various life skills at home; in this context, school curricula should legitimize home-based knowledge for a complete life. Effective education should integrate life skills and livelihood skills. Supporting this, my childhood experiences reflect that I have learnt various life skills, such as cooperation, coordination, moral ethics, and work habits, which formal schooling does not address. This means it is necessary to bridge home and school education regarding the holistic development of an individual.

School curricula should incorporate home curricula regarding learning for living. This requires contextualizing school curricula to reflect local realities, valuing and incorporating indigenous and local knowledge, promoting experiential learning, and encouraging collaboration between parents and teachers—these support bridging home and school curricula in comprehensive modes. Parents and teachers are convinced that school education is far from the lived experiences of children. They want to bridge them, but they do not have proper ideas about it. My professional reflections also advocate for bridging home and school curricula in terms of living and earning.

## **Findings**

*First*, I experienced that the home is a fundamental space for developing life-oriented competencies, such as cooperation, empathy, responsibility, self-reliance, and many more. These supports me regarding living in my life span. The field reflections over the self-experiences further stated that individuals without formal schooling are still able to sustain their lives, but they are not able to sustain themselves without home education. *Second*, I experienced that the school provides a formal space of learning that supports me in learning to be a professional. These arguments are also strongly supported by parents and children. When I experienced school education, school curricula employed structured, rigid, exam-oriented knowledge focusing on preparing for employment and economic productivity. *Third*, the understandings over the observation and experience reflect that there is a huge gap between home and school curricula in terms of living and earning. These gaps create tension and disadjustment among students, such as those who may be academically excellent but struggle with practical life skills. *Fourth*, I experienced the rigidity of school curricula and the flexibility of home curricula. The flexible home curricula support my living style, and the rigid school curricula reduce my motivation towards learning. *Fifth*, another major finding is the underutilization of local and indigenous knowledge within the formal schooling system.

## **DISCUSSION OVER FINDINGS**

The findings of the study highlight that there are two major spaces of learning in terms of living and earning, which are home and school. Education is not a unified process but rather a fragmented process where home and school contribute to learning opportunities regarding living and earning, but these are untigerated. From a constructivist perspective, the home is a powerful site of meaning-making in the practical context. Children co-constructed knowledge through social interaction, imitation, observation, role-modeling, and participation in household chores in the home environment. This aligns with experiential learning theory, which focuses on authentic learning that comes from lived experiences (Knobloch, 2003). Home curriculum practices experiential learning effectively, but the school curriculum practices are limited in some ways. On the contrary, the school curriculum provides a more positivist and standardized approach that evolves abstract knowledge and measurable outcomes (Yu, 2016). Parents expect that children

should be able to better live and earn, but these unbridged positions of home and school curricula cannot fulfill parental expectations. Based on this perspective, the home and school curricula should bridge the gap between living and earning.

The gap between 'learning to live' and 'learning to earn' creates challenges within formal schooling. Philosophically, education should meet these two dimensions (learning to live and learning to earn) of learning (Aspin & Chapman, 2011), but without the integration of these two spaces of learning, it is not possible to do so properly. However, the current education system separates these domains. As a result, learners are either socially competent or economically limited. On the other hand, individuals are academically qualified but practically under-prepared.

Likewise, the under-legitimization of local and indigenous knowledge raises crucial epistemological concerns. The contemporary modern-global curricula undermine indigenous and local cultural practices (Dada, 2024). This creates weakness in the relevance of education in everyday life. People are becoming detached from formal schooling because their expectations regarding learning to live and learning to earn cannot be fulfilled through formal schooling. This suggests the need for the design of a more integrated and context-responsive curriculum that can bridge the gap between home and school education regarding learning to live and earn. Legitimization of local and indigenous knowledge, promoting experiential learning, and aligning educational goals with both living and earning through school curricula can develop a more holistic educational framework.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the home provides life-oriented competencies in children, while the school emphasizes livelihood-oriented competencies in students. These fragmented positions of education address the dual process of learning to live and learning to earn. Every home has its own curriculum, which provides experiential learning, lived experiences, and hands-on practices. These help children throughout their lives. On the other hand, schools have a rigid, structured, pre-determined, and formal curriculum that supports further learning and earning in a professional life.

The findings of the study clearly show the disconnection between home and school curriculum in terms of learning to live and learning to earn. This disconnection creates the tensions and disadjustment among the students for their holistic approaches to life. Such students are often practically capable but academically limited or academically smart but lacking essential life skills. These types of problems have been creating a lack of motivation among parents in formal schooling. Such a disconnection reflects a broader philosophical and pedagogical imbalance in the contemporary education system. From this, I conclude that the rigid school curricula have been creating different types of problems regarding living and earning. The school curricula should be integrated with life-oriented and flexible home curricula. This supports incorporating experiential learning, legitimizing local and indigenous knowledge, and designing flexible school curricula that support learners' lived realities.

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