The Network for Peacebuilding Evaluation
Thursday Talks


Rebecca Herrington, Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Specialist of Search for Common Ground

November 19th, 2015
10:00 am – 10:45am EST

Part 1: Overview
On November 19th, 2015, DME for Peace had the opportunity to host Rebecca Herrington, Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation Specialist at Search for Common Ground, for the launch of the guide on Emerging Practices in Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Education for Peacebuilding. This guide was created with extensive collaboration with UNICEF and various of its offices and programs as well as external experts in the fields of peacebuilding and education. This guide is a product of the Learning for Peace program which is a partnership between UNICEF and the Governments of the Netherlands. Search for Common Ground continued to provide technical DM&E support to UNICEF’s Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy program. It presents various tools and resources for the design, monitoring and evaluation of education for peacebuilding.

About the Speaker:
Rebecca Harrington is currently the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at Search for Common Ground. She has been working in conflict program management and DME for peacebuilding education projects for about 7 years with regional experience in Central America, MENA and East Africa. Her specialization on governance focuses on fragile states, technical options development for dialogue, and strategies for shared societies. Rebecca holds dual masters degrees in International Development and Conflict Management for Brandeis University.

Presenter Remarks:
Rebecca introduced some of the key components and highlights of the guide in this brief webinar. Her presentation included:

1. Overview of the Guide
2. Process of Developing the Guide
3. Design and Planning
4. Monitoring Changes
5. Evaluation Considerations
Overview of the Guide

While the guide could have been focused in various ways, this guide was designed for program implementers and M&E officers in the field who are trying to bring components of these backgrounds, education and peacebuilding, into their programming to expand their outcomes and benefits with these two fields.

Process of Developing the Guide

There was an extensive document review on previous writing on education in emergencies followed by key informant interviews with professionals who have led in this field. There was great knowledge and input in two rounds from various UNICEF offices and programs on the subjects. Two consultants were also brought in to make sure the guide was balanced well between education and peacebuilding. Cynthia Koons, has been working with various international players on education in emergencies for the past few years. Christopher Talbot is one of the founders of INEE and long-time contributor to the education in emergencies space. This was followed by three rounds of external reviews, of varying degrees, which included feedback from various stakeholders in the field including PEIC, Save the Children, ECCN staff and members, INEE members, Children in Crisis, SFCG (filed program and M&E staff), etc.

Design and Planning Section

It is not a necessity to conduct M&E from a clean slate. There are various areas of the work where we can begin to fill in peacebuilding outcomes in education projects and vice versa. Examples include building up club within a school and building in alternative dispute components or taking peacebuilding program into the classroom or workshop when working with out-of-school groups like young refugee populations. Education and peacebuilding efforts, both, include long-term changes so it is important to design for multiple years and learn how to best break that down to measuring and evaluating increments of change to assure a long term process of change. The guide provides for this. It is also important to analyze the conflict context.

It is crucial to understand that education is not neutral. It will always have appositive or negative impact on the contexts and the contexts will also influence education. A great way to understand this contexts is doing conflict scans throughout the monitoring. The guide provides information on SFCG’s Conflict Scans which have a turnaround time of about 3 to 5 weeks and provide recommendations to adapt to changing context as time progresses. This was most recently applied in SFCG Burundi.

Monitoring Changes

One of the biggest challenges of the long-term nature of education for peacebuilding programming is capturing knowledge and behavioral changes, especially in monitoring and evaluation. The guide provides an example of measuring social cohesion. This was broken down into 5 categories—trust, belonging and inclusion, participation, tolerance, and recognition and legitimacy—and were enveloped into knowledge, attitude and perception surveys as well as participatory focus group discussion groups. The guide delves further into this process.

Putting implementation under review is the most important highlight of the guide. Since education for peace is new, we don’t yet know what makes the most impact and what effects the desired change. This is key to making a scalable model. How students were selected in a conflict resolution peace clubs throughout schools in Somalia made a difference in the outcomes. Some schools chose the meekest, quietest children for the clubs while other chose students who had already been displaying leadership behaviors. Those schools that chose children according to their preexisting leadership behavior clearly witnessed the desired changes within 6 months. In one instance, children helped solve the conflict between two clans on their own.
**Evaluation Considerations**

The last section of the guide goes into the balance that is needed between the appropriate size, relevance, respect and rigor of and program. The guide suggests various evaluation approaches that are more adaptable to education for peacebuilding.

Lastly, education for peacebuilding is increasingly recognized in international development. Sustainable Developments Goals 4 and 16 highlight education and peacebuilding. The conversation on this subject is just beginning and the guide provides some of the emerging practices on which the field can build.

**Part 2: Question & Answer**

**Ted Perlmutter, Columbia University, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Program:** Do children inherit the social status of parents and how that may have affected the program and be taken into consideration?

**Rebecca:** Thanks for the question, Ted. It’s a little bit difficult to answer because it’s so context based, it depends on location of program and how firmly set social status inheritance is. But because of the focus of the program, when you are looking to give voice to the children in a context where they don’t have voice or where you are looking for them to do dispute resolution at their schools with their eers and within their communities, we do take social stauts in consideration but also we’re already breaking the mod. These aren’t things that aren’t typically part of what’s been offered in those communities so we also have to watch our implementation and testing our theories of change. When you are raising children’s voices in their community, is it safe, is it conflict sensitive, and testing that continuously at every single part of implantation and does it break the mold of social status as well and testing that over time. I don’t have a concrete answer form you today but it sis something we’ve looked into and there will be case studies from various UNICEF Learning for Peace program from the 14 different programs that are a little more programmatic and context specific that might help answer that type of question.

**Deborah Trent:** I do consulting at the intersection of educational and cultural diplomacy, development, and conflict mediation and a current research project is in the emergence of participatory and inclusive DM&E. In your experience or in the experience of the term overall in preparing the guide, are diplomacy practitioners (in informational, cultural and educational exchanges) interested/engaged in education for peacebuilding? If so, how?

**Rebecca:** Yes. One of the benefits of UNICEF as a major player is that they have space to work with ministries and at that policy level. Interest varies by country and what you call it. Depends on approach and name of the policy and diplomacy level. One of the success was getting certain countries to accept the conflict scans for this programing. This opens up a space to review and revise curriculum to make more conflict sensitive. We now start building evidence and validation that has garnered support at policy level at the international stage. As time goes by, making sure support is garnered for education and peacebuilding together.

**Grace Michel:** Can you speak about the relationship between education for peacebuilding and peace education? Are these two terms to communicate the same thing? Is Ed for peacebuilding replacing peace education as the international standard?
**Rebecca:** That is an excellent question. The first chapter of the guide provides key terms and definitions. And these are working definitions specifically for this guide that were obviously reviewed by everyone who contributed but the reason we did that is because, especially around education for peacebuilding and peacebuilding education, there is a lot of confusion. They are not the same thing and I would say yes. I would say that education for peacebuilding is beginning to be thought of as something valuable to replace peace education as the international standard not just for people working in crisis in conflict but more broadly because the school environment, the learning environment even, inclusive of out-of-school children goes beyond the classroom or just a direct teaching space. The children on average or spending 20% of their time in their classroom or in a learning space. They are spending 80% of their time elsewhere which means that education for peacebuilding is taking on that systematic approach. It’s looking beyond the classroom environment be on the direct teaching environment and going into the household level, the community level, the regional level, the national level how all of these different spaces interact and how to create a safe learning environment that is inclusive of those parts of a child's life and that means can we make education for peacebuilding programing have objectives and outcomes that influence greater social cohesion not just within the school environment but within the community in which the schools exist, between communities. I think that’s the difference. I think peace education does promote knowledge, skills, and attitudes around preventing conflict in violence but education for peacebuilding looks beyond that direct learning process to really long term behavior change and a systematic influence.

**Grace Lyn Higdon:** The manual recommends the use of feedback loops but where can one find specific examples for actual tools, systems and practices for incorporating feedback loops and approaches for facilitating organizational uptake of constructive criticism into implementation review and adaptive design?

**Rebecca:** This isn’t a specific example of on the ground but last year CVA published a piece called Closing the Loop which discusses this and discusses how to incorporate listening into your organization and other organizations in the culture of doing a development work which education for peacebuilding certainly sit under the umbrella. I think specifically I agree with you, this is extremely tough. It's tough no matter what we do but especially when you're doing programming that needs to be flexible and is emerging and this is a huge reason why developmental evaluation is one of the four evaluation approaches that's recommended because the context is changing and, not only that, the programming needs to change. I mean when you do education for peace building programming you need to be prepared to be wrong because the theories of change around this space haven't been thoroughly validated they are new and that means that we need to be able to incorporate and adapt from our learnings. Part of the way of doing this is planning for it in the design phase even if you're not going to do a developmental evaluation. Planning for how we will collect data throughout the program and making space and time, which is some of the hardest thing to come by in our I work, but making space and time to have that analysis period and then to come back and revisit the design. This needs to be negotiated on a case-by-case base with your donor and your implementing partner which in and of itself can be difficult but I just think there has been more flexibility in doing this and really making sure that we have collaborative adaptive and a learning culture in or different organizations. USAid is doing a big crush as well as some of the other of larger donors in the field and continue to have those conversations and fight for that space to close the loop to to be able to really implement change your program, have space to change your log frame if you need to, have space to adjust your activities based on a rapidly evolving context and your understanding. I think you know it really starts with the champions and the exemplars in the field and moving forward with that. I'm sorry the answer isn’t more clear.
but again the feedback loops will also be highlighted in some of the case studies and that go more in depth step by step into some of the projects that have been implemented.

**Cristina Sala-Valdés:** Have you developed any specific criteria for evaluation of education for peacebuilding (Any different from the ones already present in the Caux Principles)?

**Rebecca:** Around evaluation, this is still happening. It’s still growing especially for the UNICEF Peacebuilding Education advocacy program. The 5-year project cycle is now just coming to a close and so they're developing some of that evaluation criteria right now. It's really about making sure that education specialists and peacebuilding specialists are both part of or have space in the evaluation team to review the methodology because as it stands now these two fields have been siloed for a really long time. We both view, analyze and evaluate our programing differently. Making sure that you can incorporate both viewpoints… we found in design, monitoring and evaluation that you will naturally come up with new criteria that is specific to education for peacebuilding through the process of talking about what's important in both fields and how you can merge that and how you can build that into your evaluation and as always we still refer to the OECD Evaluation criteria and principles keep those kind of as the core.

**Ella Duncan:** Can you speak about the special considerations of conflict sensitivity when working with education and children and youth?

**Rebecca:** I’ve talked about this a lot. There always different quirks or special considerations with working with different demographics and different populations. Children and youth is no different. It really needs to be a balance between simplification, and education specialist know this well. You know making your questions simpler while still retaining the core of what you want to try to answer, what you want to try to get to. Making your timing of your survey, so how long have to sit there with you or how long do they have to participate in the focus group shorter and more interactive. Really thinking about you know can your focus group just be a conversation, probably not, depending on the age group you're working with. How do you incorporate more interactive activities and what does that look like to ensure that you're still getting the data and information that you need to really learn from how the programs are being implemented and how the children and youth are really seeing them and being influenced by them, participating in them and then also paring that with rigor. Like I said making sure that you can share this data that it can help validate your theories of change. And pairing that with ethics as well. UNICEF uses the ERIC framework for ethical research around children and youth but it becomes complicated when you're working in conflict and we have to really up our standards around ethics and how we approach ethics around children and youth. This goes directly into conflict sensitivity because you know one of the guidelines is that you always ask for parental consent if you're doing interviews with children but in some contexts parents can be the perpetrators of violence or wanting to just not give their children of space to speak and be part of the problem. So how do you effectively maintain high ethical standards and do no harm principles and still make sure that you're testing and evaluating your programs. Which part of it is to make sure your programs are doing no harm and you cat know that without data. So there is actually quite a few pages on conflict sensitive M&E--not just how to make sure your programs are conflict sensitive but how to make sure your M&E is conflict sensitive. There are other really good resources that are higlhted around that that are at the end of each of the chapters.
Abdul Aziz, Yemen SFCG: There is the issue of influence of elite, even children. How to depolarize children in schools when doing peacebuilding education?

Rebecca: Yeah that's really great question. We actually just talked about this at the round table that the Interagency Network on Education Emergencies that was focused on countering violent extremism and urban violence as it relates to education. This is a very pressing conversation obviously to have and one of my feelings about it is that social cohesion is one of the best protection a school can have and that we can provide. We often talk in the education space about protection and access how can we really expand what we already do in that space to incorporate all the new global context in which we work that does involve violent groups and the influence of highly politicized and polarized situations that are ever growing. One of the things is when we're talking about tolerance, we're talking about the belonging and inclusion, and and those various factors of social cohesion, is that all of those things collectively tie a community together to defend itself to resist polarization to resist the influence of violence. We've seen this are there are wonderful research studies on it that I can send to anyone who's interested on but I think that’s the space that education for peacebuilding serves: education for peacebuilding that focuses on social cohesion is protection, is education protection at its best. I think even if there's already been polarization in a community, implementing education for peacebuilding can help combat it. By bringing different groups together in unlikely ways and waves that don't seem to be focused and reconciliation or on dispute resolution but are indeed focusing on building up that capacity and that programming and I think there's so many creative ways to do this and I hope that we follow up with another talk at some point that focuses on some of the programs of that have done this. But education for peacebuilding serves its purpose in that polarized space.

T. Wooibah Suwo, Liberia: The biggest challenge for emerging practitioners is practice or having access to mentorship programs. Are there any plans on how emerging peace evaluators can have more hands-on practical experience/training on how to go about design, and conduct evaluation of education of peacebuilding? how can conflict sensitivity be incorporated into a log frame.

Rebecca: There are some resources specifically in the guide. I would say it's not necessarily always about conflict sensitive indicators themselves but its ensuring that the indicators you do have both in education and peacebuilding and merged indicators are bridging indicators are conflict sensitive and there's a great rubric that was developed around Education Conflict sensitivity on page 28 of the guide and some of those questions will help you walk through how to ensure your indicators and your programs are complex sensitive and I think its keeping your eyes open I don't think you can just put conflict sensitive indicators in your log frame and expect your program to maintain conflict sensitivity because of environment in which we work and we don’t fully understand the impact of our programs and so really the best you can do to become conflict sensitive is to keep an opened I be willing to learn and incorporate and adapt to changes and learning from your program as you go along.
If you have any follow-up questions, please post them on the Thursday Talk Discussion Forum here.