

How Theories of Change Can Improve Education Programming and Evaluation in Conflict-Affected Contexts

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Theories of change (ToCs) are underutilized in programming and evaluation and seldom analyzed with regard to the challenges and opportunities they present, especially in conflict-affected contexts. We reflect on the use of ToCs in UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy program, using four studies we carried out in Ethiopia and Dadaab refugee camp. We found, by asking program planners and beneficiaries about ToCs and seeking to map outcomes we would expect to see if ToCs were materializing, that ToCs provide important insights for programming and evaluation, even in fluid contexts. We argue that routinizing use of ToCs, particularly what we might call "living ToCs" that can inform responsive programming, presents challenges but also offers an important step toward understanding how education can mitigate conflict and conduce peace.

Wars, disasters, and other emergencies severely disrupt education for nearly 75 million children in at least 35 countries throughout the world (Nicolai et al. 2016). Scholars and practitioners widely acknowledge that in situations of armed conflict, education can be both lifesaving and protective (Nicolai 2005; Triplehorn and Chen 2006; Aguilar and Retamal 2009). However, questions persist regarding how to ensure the provision of education programming and what type of education programming may best contribute to building peace.

International education and development practitioners increasingly use theories of change (ToCs) in developing and conflict-affected contexts to implement and evaluate education programming (Stein and Valters 2012). However, routinizing the successful use of ToCs in programming (design and implementation) and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts remains a work in progress. We examined more than 250 articles, including experimental, quasi-experimental, and observational research designs, and found that only six

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articles—less than 1 percent—mentioned ToCs at all.¹ None of the articles used ToCs as a lens to evaluate programming. Further, when major donor projects use ToCs, there is little comprehensive documentation, reflection, or analysis of opportunities and challenges related to their use (Stein and Valters 2012).

Education in conflict-affected contexts may provide a “hard case” (Lijphart 1971) for the use of ToCs. Conflict-affected contexts may pose particular challenges, including the need for very quick implementation, rapidly changing conflict and operational dynamics, many actors with different and sometimes divergent interests, inconsistent funding, and the need for safe, routine access to program beneficiaries (Puri et al. 2015). Furthermore, the meaningful use of ToCs for peace-building education interventions in conflict-affected contexts may be hindered by the still-predominant belief that education is simply a social good, with little consideration of the ways in which it may contribute to peace and even less consideration of its possibility to contribute to conflict (King 2014).

Yet, improved knowledge leading to responsive programming is critical. In part, this is because the protracted nature of armed conflict means that, far from being “short term,” education interventions in conflict-affected contexts often continue for many years (Talbot 2015). Moreover, improved knowledge of “what works” is important because the need for material and human resources in conflict-affected contexts often exceeds supply; we need to know how best to direct scarce resources. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the outcomes that programming seeks to achieve—economic opportunity and durable peace—are crucial (see USAID 2017).

To explore whether and how ToCs may be useful in difficult and shifting conditions, as well as their use in education programming and evaluation, we collectively review and analyze evaluations of four distinct education interventions in conflict-affected contexts, two in Ethiopia and two in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp, that we carried out in 2015. We also asked program planners and beneficiaries about the ToCs, to map the observable implications we would expect if the ToCs were materializing. All focused on programming implemented between 2012 and 2015 as part of UNICEF’s Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy (PBEA) program, also known as “Learning for Peace.” The model underlying PBEA across all programs entailed (i) identifying conflict drivers, (ii) understanding the ways in which drivers interacted with education actors and institutions at different levels, (iii) designing education interventions that aim to address those interactions, and (iv) transforming those drivers of conflict and facilitating peace building (Novelli 2011; Smith et al.

¹ We conducted a systematic key word search of all 251 articles included in Burde et al.’s (2015) study of education in conflict-affected contexts for the terms “theory of change,” “process tracing,” “log frame,” “logframe,” and “log-frame.” Including additional terms such as “program theory” may have yielded additional mentions of ToCs. We are grateful to Dana Burde and her coauthors.

2011; UNICEF 2013). Several ToCs guided program decisions for each PBEA education intervention on the basis of how different conflict drivers were affected by education or conversely how they affected education.

In this article, we argue that routinizing the use of ToCs is an important step forward for both education programming and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts. Through examples from our case studies, we show opportunities, but also significant challenges in practice, for each of these purposes. We also show that in such settings what we call a “living ToC” can contribute to responsive and improved programming throughout an intervention’s life cycle.

Of course, we do not claim that ToCs can do everything. No matter how good a ToC, if a program is not well implemented, expected outcomes are unlikely to follow. Likewise, even if one follows best practices for laying out a ToC that make sense to key populations and implements the program as aspired, it still might not work. We simply argue that routinizing the use of ToCs—including a thorough conflict analysis, using the process of mapping ToCs to highlight and challenge program logic and assumptions, thinking through levels of intervention and impact, matching aspired outcomes to target populations, and monitoring and reflecting on unintended processes and outcomes—can help us move toward the goal of learning “what works” and eventually better implementing education programs and serving beneficiaries in conflict-affected contexts.

The article proceeds as follows. First, we review existing literature related to ToCs in programming and evaluation, with a parallel discussion of their use in the field of education in conflict-affected contexts. Second, we explain our choice to focus on PBEA as a lens through which to think about the contribution of ToCs, describe the four studies we carried out, and discuss our approach for this article. Third, we present our findings, supporting our overarching argument that routinizing the use of ToCs is a positive step forward in education programming and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts. Throughout, we consider the idea of “living ToCs” and the benefits and challenges that follow, and we conclude by explaining how and why ToCs should be routinized in education programming and evaluation in such contexts. Many of our findings also extend to broader international education programming.

Design and Evaluation of Education Programming in Conflict-Affected Contexts and Theories of Change

Theories of Change for Programming and Evaluation

In simplest terms, a theory of change is an explanation of why and how a program works (Weiss 1995). Here, we define a ToC as “a set of assumptions [held by policy makers and program planners] that explain both the mini-steps that lead to a long-term goal and the connections between these ac-

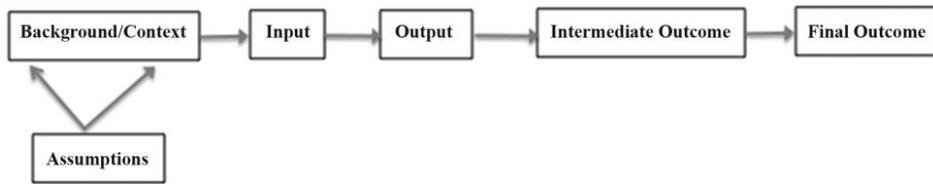


FIG. 1.—Different components of a theory of change and how they are intended to work together (Allen, Cruz, and Warburton 2017, 4).

tivities and the outcomes of an intervention or program” (Anderson 2004, 2). Figure 1 represents the basic components of a ToC and how the components are intended to work together.

There remains a variety of views about the concept and use of a ToC. At one end of a continuum, ToCs are described as a technical tool; on the other end, a ToC is an approach to developing a nuanced and complex understanding of how change happens in unpredictable settings (Stein and Valters 2012). Throughout this article and our studies of UNICEF’s PBEA programs, we adopt a middle-ground approach and use ToCs as a “way of thinking about how a project is expected to work” (Stein and Valters 2012, 5), and we take this a step further to discuss the possibility of ToCs as “living.” In this sense, we can imagine an adaptive and iterative process wherein, for example, intermediate outcomes affect rethought inputs, outputs affect the background/context, or the context simply shifts, requiring rethinking, as in figure 2.

Stein and Valters (2012), in a review of practitioner-oriented literature, identified four broad purposes for ToCs: (1) strategic planning, (2) monitoring and evaluation, (3) description of program activities and achievements to internal and external partners, and (4) learning among program devel-

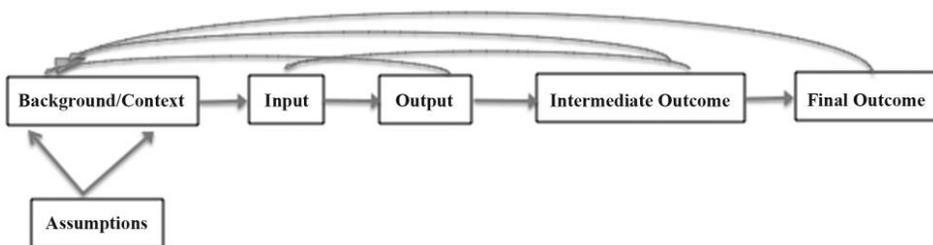


FIG. 2.—Ways in which a theory of change can be “living” during the project cycle. Information on steps toward intermediate and final outcomes can be used to adjust inputs, as needed. This information, as well as information gathered on outputs can be used to make relevant updates to the program. In addition, contexts are often changing, requiring tweaks or changes to inputs. Moreover, if the program is working, the context will change, perhaps further driving adjustments in programming.

opers and implementers. Throughout this article we focus on a similar list for *programming*, including (1) strategic planning and (3) description, and for *evaluation*, including (2) monitoring and evaluation and (4) learning in conflict-affected contexts.

While using ToCs is increasingly popular among international development and education practitioners (Stein and Valters 2012), the concept is not new. Their antecedent, the Logical Framework (hereafter LogFrame), has long been used as a tool for planning, managing, and measuring the effectiveness of development projects (Bakewell and Garbutt 2005; Harley 2005). Both approaches describe the ways in which programs do (or do not) produce the intended results, although scholars point to differences between the two. A LogFrame is typically linear—all activities lead to outputs, which lead to outcomes (e.g., “we plan to do X which will give Y result”) and are mainly used for program monitoring (Jensen 2013). In contrast, ToCs are more flexible and might include, for example, cyclical processes and feedback loops. Additionally, ToCs consider the “big picture,” including issues related to the context and operating environment that program designers and evaluators cannot control in evaluation. While the relative merits of each are still debated (Rogers 2007; Weiss 2007; Funnell and Rogers 2011), the popularity of ToCs is growing because they are intended to be flexible and responsive to context. Indeed, these are precisely some of the features that make ToCs a well-suited tool to meet the challenges common to programming and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts.

Programming

According to “best practices” (across the literature surveyed), ToCs should be agreed on at the outset of a program by a wide range of stakeholders, such as program designers, implementers, funders, beneficiaries, evaluators, and “be based on local knowledge and experience” (Stein and Valters 2012, 13). Achieving participation and consensus on ToCs across diverse constituencies can sometimes be challenging, particularly in conflict-affected contexts (King 2013). Another best practice, in “fragile” (i.e., conflict-affected) situations is a “thorough conflict (or structural) analysis . . . as well as an investigation of drivers of conflict” (Stein and Valters 2012, 13) as a basis on which to build the ToC. These best practices lay the foundation for implementation.

While much less discussed, these practices also provide a framework against which to integrate new information throughout the program cycle and facilitate reflexive changes to programming throughout implementation (Ramalingam et al. 2014). For example, changes to operational or conflict dynamics might occur from changing conditions on the ground, due to the project or wider events. Since PBEA tried to implement this reflexivity, our case studies offer insight into the challenges and opportunities of such a living ToC model.

Evaluation

Several organizations working to address economic inequality in developing contexts are committed to using ToCs in evaluation, including Innovations for Poverty Action, Poverty Action Lab, and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. These organizations, along with many scholars, have produced a good deal of literature outlining how ToCs can and should be used in evaluations. Looking across this literature reveals lively debate regarding approaches to ToCs in evaluations, including when the evaluation should be conducted (at the end of a program or at routine intervals during the program cycle); whether ToCs must be articulated by program designers/implementers at program outset or whether they can be determined through an evaluation that seeks to capture implicit ToCs; and whether a credible counterfactual is necessary for a rigorous program evaluation or whether a narrative evaluation of ToCs using anthropological approaches is most appropriate for yielding insights into “what works.” We do not seek to resolve these debates. Rather, we acknowledge them and, in our findings, build on the literature we found most illustrative for how we analyzed our findings about the PBEA ToCs.

Most education programs in conflict-affected contexts are not formally evaluated by any means (Wright 2010). Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement among scholars and practitioners on the need to conduct more evaluations, and more rigorous evaluations, on the impact of development programs and other types of international programming.² Of programs in conflict-affected contexts that are evaluated, Wright, in a 2010 review of “education in emergencies” research, states that descriptive single or comparative case studies that rely on one-on-one or focus group interviews have been, and continue to be, the predominate mode of formative and summative program assessment. However, this approach to research has been critiqued for lacking “methodologically sound research practices” (23) because its recommendations lack transferability or generalizability. Similarly, Burde et al. (2015) reviewed more than 250 academic articles, finding “an absence of robust evidence” despite “a large number of strong observational designs,” including detailed ethnographies and case studies (v). The authors suggest that qualitative research can be paired with randomized control trials to “provide additional contextual detail [on] ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions to explain findings” (454) in ways that experimental or quasi-experimental approaches alone cannot. Here, we explore whether and how ToCs may be an important part of implementing these suggestions to move the field forward. We also consider the challenges a living ToC can present for researchers like us or for practitioners engaged in evaluation in conflict-affected contexts.

² Levine and Savedoff (2006); Ludwig et al. (2011); Donaldson et al. (2014); Burde et al. (2015).

Case Selection and Study Method

UNICEF's PBEA program is a particularly relevant case to examine the opportunities and challenges for iteratively using ToCs in programming and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts. It was exemplary, at least in its intention, in making ToCs central to programming and evaluation (Herrington 2015). UNICEF implemented PBEA programs in 14 countries between 2012 and 2016, with the aim of strengthening resilience, social cohesion, and human security in those countries by improving policies and practices for education and peace building (UNICEF 2012).³ The program recognized the "two faces of education" (Bush and Saltarelli 2000), that education can contribute both to peace and to conflict, a crucial but not yet mainstream understanding (King 2014). PBEA also made learning a core priority, setting out to "generat[e] Evidence and Knowledge" as one of its five goals (UNICEF 2013, 3). We evaluated four different PBEA interventions, two in Ethiopia and two in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp. Table 1 provides a summary of each PBEA program we studied and a summary of data collection from each site.

In Ethiopia, PBEA was implemented in the four developing regional states (Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar, and Gambella), which are prone to frequent natural disasters and affected by long-standing conflicts fueled by volatile situations in border countries. The four regions are characterized by weak governance systems with low capacity to deliver social services, including the planning, provision, and management of education (UNICEF 2014). We evaluated the Alternative Basic Education (ABE) program in the Somali region. This program aimed to increase access for children to quality, relevant education through the construction of ABE centers in remote pastoralist communities and flexible scheduling of classes (King and Monaghan 2015). We also studied in-school and after-school civics and ethics education programming for children and adolescents in Benishangul-Gumuz (Monaghan and King 2016a), which aimed to strengthen social cohesion among different ethnic groups through Ethiopian history and governance programs and to provide opportunities for civic engagement in their communities.

We studied two programs in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, home to almost 350,000 registered refugees, approximately 50 percent of whom were children and youth at the time of the study. Ninety-seven percent of refugees in the camp were from Somalia; however, in the years preceding the study, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had also settled in Dadaab refugees from other countries throughout East Africa. The UNHCR and its implementing partners provide food, water, shelter, health care, and primary schooling to refugees. However, the provision of these services across

³ The 14 countries are Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya (Dadaab refugee camp), Liberia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen.

TABLE 1
PBEA PROGRAMS, TOCS, AND DATA

PBEA Program Intervention	Area of Implementation	Conflict	UNICEF PBEA Intended Outcome	UNICEF PBEA ToC	Program-Specific ToC	Data
Alternative Basic Education	Somali Region, Ethiopia	Interclan conflict, intraregional/interstate conflict, tension/conflict between agropastoralists and government	Increase access to quality and relevant conflict-sensitive education that contributes to peace	Education for Peacebuilding ToC: by providing marginalized communities access to flexible and safe learning spaces with culturally and economically relevant curriculum, excluded communities will be more resilient to shocks and stresses, resulting in greater social cohesion and resilience	ABE ToC: if access to education as well as relevant and appropriate education is improved through ABE centers, intra- and interclan conflicts caused by inequity in access to social services will decrease and social cohesion will increase	48 participants in one-on-one interviews, site visits to three ABE centers, KAP data set
Civics and ethics education	Benishangul-Gumuz Region, Ethiopia	Interethnic conflict, intraethnic conflict, interregional/interstate conflict, tension between indigenous and settler groups	Increase the capacity of children, parents, teachers and other duty bearers to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote social cohesion	Behavioral Change Theory ToC: If teachers, parents, children, and community members are equipped with skills and knowledge for managing disputes and promoting peaceful relations, community resilience against stresses and shocks will be increased, leading to increased social cohesion and resilience		28 participants in one-on-one interviews, site visits to two PBEA-supported schools, KAP data set

Peace education (primary school program, Sports for Development and Peace)	Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya	Conflict drivers: low quality and relevance of education, routine violence in schools, excluded adolescents and youth recruited for violent causes	Increase the capacity of children, parents, teachers, and other duty bearers to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote social cohesion	Education for Peacebuilding ToC: if schools become violence-free zones and teachers use positive classroom management techniques, the social norms on the acceptance and use of violence will be reduced and promote constructive dispute resolution methods among communities and greater social cohesion	35 participants in one-on-one interviews, one site visit, KAP data set
Technical and vocational education training	Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya	Conflict drivers: low quality and relevance of education, routine violence in schools, excluded adolescents and youth recruited for violent causes	Increase access to quality and relevant conflict-sensitive education that contributes to peace	Education for Peacebuilding ToC: by providing marginalized youth with access to relevant life skills and vocational training opportunities and creating space for constructive engagement in social and cultural activities, patterns of youth exclusion fueling grievance and violent conflict will be reduced, resulting in greater social cohesion	50 participants in one-on-one interviews, one site visit, KAP data set

NOTE.—PBEA = Peacebuilding, Education, and Advocacy; ToCs = theories of change; ABE = Alternative Basic Education; FGD = focus group discussion; KAP = Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice.

Dadaab's five subcamps has continually faced significant challenges—high student-to-teacher ratios; a shortage of textbooks, desks, and other school supplies; and a lack of funds for school maintenance and upkeep (Monaghan 2015). We evaluated a vocational and life skills program entitled the Youth Education Pack (YEP), which aimed to increase livelihood opportunities for Somali youth upon repatriation to Somalia, providing 4-month skills courses and Somali language and literacy courses (Monaghan and King 2016b). We studied two models of peace education; the first model aimed to promote more peaceful attitudes and behaviors writ large through weekly peace education courses for children enrolled in the camp's primary schools, and the second model supported Sports for Development and Peace (SDP), an extracurricular program for youth from the camp and the host community (King and Monaghan 2016).

In each study, we used a similar approach to data collection and analysis. The PBEA team and its partners produced the ToCs and implemented associated programming. As external researchers, we conducted an evaluation using the ToCs to examine the extent to which field operations were consistent with the ToCs and whether and how the ToCs had been, or should have been, revisited in order to improve programming and outcomes.

We spent approximately 2 weeks in each site, conducting one-on-one interviews and focus groups with program planners and implementers at UNICEF country and field offices, Ministry of Education (MoE) staff at regional and local offices (Ethiopia), and implementing partner international nongovernmental organizations (Dadaab). We also conducted site visits to interview parents, teachers, students, and other program administrators. Where possible, we drew on Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice surveys, administered separately by UNICEF and its partners over an 18-month period, to collect data for each program throughout implementation. In our analysis, we drew on the logics and techniques of process tracing (George and Bennett 2005). By charting observable implications or identifiable features, one could expect to see whether the ToCs were materializing. We asked program-level interview participants what they believed the ToC to be and whether it matched intended processes and outcomes, and we asked program-level and intended beneficiaries indirect and direct questions related to the observable implications of each ToC element. We also considered how the ToC effectively addressed specific conflict drivers, as identified by PBEA.

The studies share limitations affecting our ability to draw conclusions. We began our time-limited engagement as external, independent consultants with each program at least a year after it started. As a result, the study design did not allow for pre- and postcomparisons of participants or comparison to control groups. This prevented us from carrying out robust impact evaluations (White 2011), although the organizations wished we would make stronger impact statements. At the same time, logistical and safety issues hampered

access to sites and participants.⁴ Many of these limitations are typical to evaluations in conflict-affected contexts, but they can also be overcome, so we recommend sustained engagement with researchers from the beginning of projects.

This article presents illustrative examples about the opportunities and challenges provided by living ToCs. Because ToCs were central to UNICEF's PBEA program, an examination of its four interventions offers the opportunity to explore some of the reach as well as limits of ToCs for education programming and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts.

Findings

We highlight five insights into the opportunities and challenges of using ToCs in programming and evaluation that may be useful for the design, implementation, and evaluation of education programs in conflict-affected contexts.

Comprehensive Context Analyses Should Inform Programming

A thorough examination of context is key to developing ToCs for program design and implementation (White 2011). Likewise, according to UNICEF, understanding how interactions between actors and institutions across sectors and levels drive conflict and how these manifest in education is central to the development of interventions intended to address and ultimately change those drivers of conflict. In the Somali region's ABE centers, the context analysis identified specific manifestations of interclan conflict (lack of or inequitable political participation), intraclan conflict (scarcity of resources), interregional/interstate conflict (again, scarcity of resources), as well as tension between pastoralists, agropastoralists, and the government (King and Monaghan 2015, 6). Although the program did not directly tackle these conflicts, the analysis emphasized that "inequity is a main driver of conflict in Ethiopia and is a result of weak service delivery capacity" (BDS 2015, 10). Thus, focusing on the provision of education to excluded populations was a contextually informed programmatic decision.

Putting comprehensive context analyses into practice, however, is not always straightforward. In Ethiopia, UNICEF and the MoE worked with the Centre for Federal Studies at Addis Ababa University to conduct a "context analysis" in 2013 in each of the four regions. The MoE insisted that the term "context" replace the term "conflict" since none of the regional governments considered their regions "conflict affected" (King and Monaghan 2015, 6). We learned through interviews with program planners that these concerns delayed the context analysis process. Thus, the context analysis was finalized in

⁴ Additional details are in Monaghan and King (2016b).

concert with the PBEA implementation, rather than preceding and informing programming as intended.

The issue was even more problematic in Dadaab, where PBEA programming was informed by only a “light conflict analysis” (UNICEF 2013). It identified some conflict drivers such as “low quality and relevance of education” (3) that fuel economic and social vulnerability, although interethnic conflict or international conflict were not explored despite their existence in Dadaab (King and Monaghan 2015, 8). Absent a thorough conflict analysis, programming was built essentially on normative goals.

It became clear that the Kenyan government, a key stakeholder in the program, had become concerned, after the Westgate shopping mall attack in 2013, that out-of-school refugee youth in the camp were being radicalized and recruited into armed groups in Somalia, particularly Al Shabaab. According to PBEA staff, such changes in priorities and assumptions, common to conflict-affected contexts, made it difficult to plan responsive programming. The already designed and in progress youth skills and employment program could have stemmed the radicalization, as well as other types of conflict, although PBEA staff recognized that a conflict analysis could have allowed for better programming. Staff also identified the lack of a dedicated experienced conflict analysis or peace-building officer in the Kenya office as part of the problem.

Too often, when it comes to education programming in contexts such as Dadaab, “conflict” becomes the context and is seen as explanatory in and of itself. While a wide range of drivers (e.g., resource scarcity, disputes over land ownership) cause conflict of various type and scale, these are still often specified with insufficient detail. Designing targeted programming necessitates knowing what specific conflicts the program is intended to address. Thinking through the components of a ToC, including a comprehensive conflict analysis that may change with time, is an important part of this goal.

The Process of Mapping ToCs Should Highlight and Challenge Logic and Assumptions

The process of mapping ToCs should make explicit and even challenge program logic and assumptions. With regard to the SDP initiative in Dadaab, for example, PBEA funded two different models: the Talent Academy in 2013 and 2014 brought refugee and nonrefugee youth together for a standalone 2-week program centered around sports; in 2015, the program shifted to extracurricular inter- and intraschool/camp sports programs for refugee youth in secondary school. The ToC for both earlier and later programs, without distinction, was “that if schools become violence free zones and teachers use positive classroom management techniques, the social norms on the acceptance and use of violence will be reduced and promote constructive dispute resolution methods among communities and greater social cohesion” (UNICEF 2014, 1). Both programs employed the same ToC, intended for use in schools,

but the later program was an extracurricular program in which teachers did not receive training in positive classroom management techniques. The different programming models also did not specify whether they were to address different types of conflict. Given these inconsistencies, as well as the high level of generality of the ToC, it was difficult to define the meaningful, observable implications of the programs for evaluation. In this case, an accurate program-specific ToC, based on a thorough conflict analysis, would have been better before implementation.

Inconsistencies existed between different stakeholders' understandings of the ToC for the same program. In the Somali region of Ethiopia, ABE programming aimed to increase access to education through ABE centers in remote communities and offer flexible programming, an important feature given that most people in the Somali region had not participated in any type of formal schooling, and only 8.6 percent had completed grade 4 (Ethiopian EPA 2011). The ABE-specific ToC was "if access to education as well as relevant and appropriate education is improved through ABE centers, intra and inter-clan conflicts caused by inequity in access to social services will decrease and social cohesion will increase" (UNICEF 2013, 2). There was also a PBEA ToC that guided programming: "by providing marginalized communities access to flexible and safe learning spaces with culturally and economically relevant curriculum, excluded communities will be more resilient to shocks and stresses resulting in greater social cohesion and resilience" (2). UNICEF officials mentioned both ToCs.

In contrast, local government officials who implemented the program stated that by changing livelihoods through ABE from pastoralist to sedentary, the drivers of conflict related to mobility and scarcity of resources would be reduced or eliminated altogether. According to some of our interviewees, this contested ToC was particularly significant because the potential challenges and negative impacts on pastoralists, such as limited employment opportunities, increased perceptions of pastoralist livelihoods as "backward," a view that was contrary to the desired outcomes of the PBEA program design. This ToC and associated processes were routinely rejected by UNICEF staff who were concerned about antipastoralist biases and "cultural violence" against pastoralist groups. Yet, the contested ToC was consistently repeated by representatives of the local and regional MoE offices in Ethiopia interviewed for our study.

This example points to the importance of using ToCs during the project to revisit logic and assumptions throughout to improve programming and results. UNICEF PBEA staff regard this example, as we have written it here, as part of the "learning" process central to PBEA. Updating the program's ToC and consequently its programming and evaluation according to lessons learned is a good example of what a living ToC and responsive programming might look like.

Finally, we found that programming did not always match goals or that goals were inadequately specified. These reflect the challenges of working in a shifting policy context, as was the case with the Kenyan government. Nonetheless, we found that explicitly returning to ToCs can be a way to uncover, and perhaps address, such shortcomings that negatively affect program outcomes. For instance, according to program planners, the PBEA program in Dadaab was designed following an announcement in 2013 that the government would close the camp and repatriate refugees. Program planners were concerned that refugees did not have appropriate livelihood skills to support themselves upon repatriation to Somalia. They noted that the livelihood strategies needed in the peri-urban environment of Dadaab differed significantly from those needed in Somalia, where most livelihood strategies remained focused on agriculture and pastoralism. Yet, in the ToC and program design, it was not clear where the program's desired impacts—social cohesion and increased resilience—were meant to transpire: Dadaab or Somalia. The Somali language was included as a component of all 4-month vocational courses, to help with repatriation. However, most of the courses matched skills and needs in Dadaab rather than those needed in Somalia.

Programming Should Consider How Different Interventions Might Affect Different Target Populations

A well-designed ToC helps to identify specific populations targeted by the intervention in question and considers whether and how different components of the intervention are intended to affect differentially those populations. However, even if the target population is specified in the ToC, the program might fail to direct programming adequately (an implementation concern), or the ToC may not include other populations that receive programming (a theoretical and programmatic concern). In the Dadaab YEP program that aimed to increase livelihood opportunities for Somali youth upon repatriation, many program beneficiaries were not Somali. Given the recent influx of East African refugees, some youths participating in the short skills courses were from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan. That these participants were not Somali complicated the evaluation of the ToC and the ultimate achievement of some of the Somalia-based goals of the program, which were voluntary repatriation and the prevention of radicalization and recruitment into armed groups.

Incidentally, the inclusion of non-Somali youth may have facilitated the achievement of one of the PBEA program's high-level goals—increased access to quality, relevant, context responsive education (UNICEF 2014). Respondents, for instance, discussed the ways in which the YEP program helped to provide access to education for youth from South Sudan and other countries throughout East Africa, whose academic credentials do not transfer to camp schools. One graduate of the YEP program from South Sudan who had been within months of graduating from secondary school when he was forced to

flee the country explained that the YEP program offered him the chance to continue his education and earn an income. His story illustrates the ways in which YEP programming is one of the only means through which youth belonging to non-Somali groups could continue their education and acquire income-generating opportunities. However, we again note that non-Somali youths are not the primary intended beneficiaries of PBEA YEP for some of the outcomes.

Focusing our attention on the ToC allowed us to account for non-Somali youth and to think through the ways in which the program affects them. UNICEF PBEA staff explained that tensions with host communities was another concern that explains why at least some of the vulnerable youth from other groups were allowed in the program. This case points to the importance of a responsive ToC and how program planners and implementers can map, disseminate, and respond to changing contexts over multiple years.

Levels of Intervention and Outcome Should Be Consistent

Literature devoted to ToCs recommends comprehensively considering the relationship between all elements from start to finish, including the program ToC, the intervention ToC, inputs, outputs, and impacts. Doing so allows us to consider whether and how the components of the ToC follow logically and whether the levels of intervention and outcome—individual, school, group, community—are consistent across the reasoning.

When programming goals have multiple levels, the ToC can contain inconsistencies that may affect programming and evaluation results. For example, in both peace education programs in Dadaab there were inconsistencies in the ToC regarding levels of aspired outcomes. Program literature clearly stated that peace education was intended to facilitate community-level changes. However, for both programs, in literature outlining intended outcomes and ToCs, the ways in which school-level programs and aspired-for changes would facilitate changes in social cohesion and resilience at the community level were unclear.

These inconsistencies may transpire as programs shift between funders and implementers and between the emergency and development phases. UNICEF PBEA assumed funding responsibilities for the Peace Education Program in 2013 but continued working with the National Church Council of Kenya, which had been implementing the program since 1998 and did not make any changes to programming (e.g., curriculum, program structure). As per the ToC quoted above, despite being school based, the program ultimately aimed at “promot[ing] constructive dispute resolution . . . among *communities* and greater social cohesion” (UNICEF 2014; emphasis added). PBEA-funded Peace Education Program activities included annual training workshops for teachers, weekly peace education classes for primary school students, after-school peace clubs, and in-school Girl Guides clubs for female students (King

and Monaghan 2016, 15). There were several anecdotal examples of students demonstrating nonviolent conflict resolution mechanisms and strategies in school (18–22). Specific community impacts of PEP remain unclear. According to PBEA staff, however, there may be program spillover to community social activities and reactions to the program. It is therefore useful to specify connections between different levels of outcomes and the time frame along which the ToC is thought to materialize, as well as how these dimensions may change as anticipated outputs materialize (or not) and unanticipated ones appear.

Unintended Processes and Outcomes Should Be Considered

Finally, understanding unintended consequences is important in conflict-affected contexts (Puri et al. 2015). We found several previously unidentified pathways through which various programs may be working; integrating these unintended processes and outcomes into a living ToC may improve programming and evaluation. In the ABE programs in Ethiopia, for example, one emerging pathway through which the program may have been effecting change, separate from the main ToC, was by bringing children from different ethnic groups together in the same learning space. There were examples of ways in which parent-teacher associations provided opportunities for ethnic groups to work together to solve school-based problems. This process resonates well with contact theory (Allport 1954); under the right conditions, increased contact and interaction among members of different groups can reduce prejudice (Pettigrew 1998). A second emerging pathway was that by following a daily routine and adhering to school rules and guidelines, drivers of conflict related to undisciplined and youthful behavior may be reduced. Both unintended processes are important areas of further investigation and could offer opportunities for program planners and implementers to structure future programming in order to achieve this effect (e.g., by providing more teacher training on behavior management and multigrade teaching).

An additional intermediate outcome is improved ability of beneficiaries to advocate for other social services. The research on ABE identified this outcome that was not a program goal. Facilitators explained that PBEA-supported ABE centers helped communities understand the process of advocating for social services by submitting a request for an ABE to their local education office. PBEA-supported ABE was often the first time that communities received access to rights from the Ethiopian government. Another facilitator explained that through claiming their rights to schools, communities realized their rights to other social services (e.g., health clinics, water). These may be important for peace building since the context analysis identified inequitable distribution of government resources and social services across clans and communities as a source of conflict (King and Monaghan 2015, 8).

Conclusion: ToCs and Living ToCs in Conflict-Affected Contexts

In this article, we argued that ToCs are an underutilized, although well-suited, approach to education programming and evaluation in conflict-affected contexts. By asking program planners and beneficiaries about the ToCs and seeking to map expected, observable outcomes, useful and important insights can be drawn that improve programming and evaluation. Apart from making the case for routinizing the use of ToCs, our research led us to explore the importance of a living ToC and, in turn, of responsive programming throughout a program's life cycle. This was what UNICEF PBEA endeavored to do.

A living ToC might involve conducting regular evaluations either similar to our research on the UNICEF PBEA program or, better yet, in ways that might allow for more robust conclusions to be drawn regarding program impact. The information can then be used to revise the ToCs and adjust programming accordingly. This view and use of ToCs differentiates them from the more linear ideas originally underpinning LogFrames and moves them more toward an embrace of feedback loops, nonlinearities, and multiple pathways to the same outcomes. Of course, the logic underpinning programming and the desired outcomes of a program cannot, for any practical programming or evaluation purposes, change constantly. Finding balance between acknowledging and addressing fluidity and enough stability for ToC-informed programming and evaluation is imperfectly resolved here.

Beyond programming and evaluation specific to individual education interventions in conflict-affected contexts, routinizing the use of ToCs and adopting the concept of "living ToCs" offers the possibility of increased knowledge regarding "what works." Over time, developing an evidence base of education programs designed and implemented using ToCs across conflict-affected contexts would allow for scholars and practitioners to understand the relationship between (different) programming and (similar and different) outcomes and, subsequently, also the conditions under which policies and programs developed and implemented in one context might be transferred effectively to others.

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