

# CONCLUSION

*“It is not that we should simply seek new and better ways for managing society, the economy and the world. The point is that we should fundamentally change the way we behave.”*

- VACLAV HAVEL

An historian once said, “Most of our so-called reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do.”<sup>35</sup> Monitoring and evaluation offer the opportunity to counter this tendency, to open ourselves to new information, and to engage in responsible analysis. To exploit this opportunity, greater effort must be made to incorporate design, monitoring, and evaluation into conflict transformation programs. This effort will serve the peacebuilding field by increasing our understanding of, and ability to prove change in complex conflict situations.

Much has been learned from DM&E in peacebuilding so far...

When Boston wanted to stop youth violence and homicide, a partnership – composed of researchers, community leaders, members of the clergy, probation officers, police officials, and federal enforcement agency personnel – came together to devise a strategy to intervene in the local gun market. When data revealed that the problem was more specifically caused by youth gangs, not simply gun markets, the partnership adjusted its strategies. Boston’s hard work paid off: youth homicides fell by two-thirds after the ceasefire strategy was put in place.<sup>36</sup>

In considering the importance of involving local authorities in refugee reintegration projects in Rwanda and Bosnia, an evaluation team concluded: Local and regional authorities were taken into account in different ways. Some were included, some excluded intentionally, and some ignored. Where it was possible to include them constructively, they became important allies in promoting coexistence. Where they were ignored, they undermined success.<sup>37</sup>

More dedicated thinking and testing of DM&E techniques is necessary so that they, too, become increasingly effective for peacebuilding. Though strides have been made, there is still much to learn in order for DM&E to reach its full potential as a learning tool within conflict transformation.

One can learn to build with stone by reading books and experimenting. The principles of laying stone are few and easy to follow – enough

<sup>35</sup> James Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*, [http://en.thinkexist.com/quotes/james\\_harvey\\_robinson/](http://en.thinkexist.com/quotes/james_harvey_robinson/).

<sup>36</sup> National Institute of Justice, *1998 Annual Report to Congress*, December 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Eileen F. Babbitt et al., *Imagine Coexistence: Assessing Refugee Reintegration Efforts in Divided Communities*, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, July 2002.

so that progress comes quickly in making walls both aesthetically appealing and structurally sound. By taking apart a stone house built by experienced masons, the novice stone layer discovers how the veterans dealt with more nuanced and challenging issues. The novice can then recycle those stones and build another house in ways she/he had not known previously.

We've tried to disassemble design, monitoring, and evaluation for peacebuilding by taking each subject apart "stone by stone." Every reader will have to gather the stones presented here, and others from elsewhere, to build their own structure. Hopefully, the construction will include approaches and ideas that our readers had not known or previously practiced.

Of course, many of the building blocks needed to succeed in peacebuilding have not been addressed in this manual. Our intent is not to tell anyone how to transform conflicts, but rather to illustrate the range of choices in peacebuilding that catalyze needed change and the techniques available for that work to contribute to learning within the field.

We've maintained throughout this manual that monitoring and evaluation are the most accessible learning disciplines available to peacebuilding. In putting this manual together, we're reminded of another valuable learning discipline: writing. We've forced ourselves to support our beliefs with examples, to check our jargon, and to think backwards and forwards on how we've done and will do many of the tasks here described. We've done less well at shedding our Western paradigms and values. The acts of writing, explaining, and connecting thought and action have proven to be very educational for the authors, as they can be for all peacebuilders.

In closing, we would like to draw attention one more time to a number of themes that run throughout this manual:

- Peacebuilding and DM&E are all about change.
- The most brilliant and creative ideas only become the best alternatives to bringing about change when they incorporate sound practices in design, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Peacebuilding is a unifying process. Successful design, monitoring, and evaluation bring together the parties, practitioners, designers, and evaluators. The artists and the technicians together can produce quality peacebuilding initiatives.
- We can all make better decisions. The data collected through a baseline, monitoring exercise, or an evaluation should inform our decisions, and better decisionmaking can, in turn, improve our work.

- Knowing when to get help is important. Knowing how to use help is imperative.
- DM&E is an opportunity. Baselines, monitoring, and evaluation provide the peacebuilding field with a valuable opportunity to show policymakers, the public, the press, and the people who we work for – the stakeholders – that conflict transformation produces positive results.

In closing, the old adage for university professors, “publish or perish,” comes to mind. For peacebuilding, there is a new standard rightly being imposed: demonstrate effectiveness or perish. The concepts, tools, and examples in this introductory manual are intended to help peace workers of all stripes rally to this call for results. We believe peacebuilding works and that we have a responsibility to show others the results.

*“This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”*

**- WINSTON CHURCHILL**