

Social-Emotional Response and Information Scenarios (SERAIS)

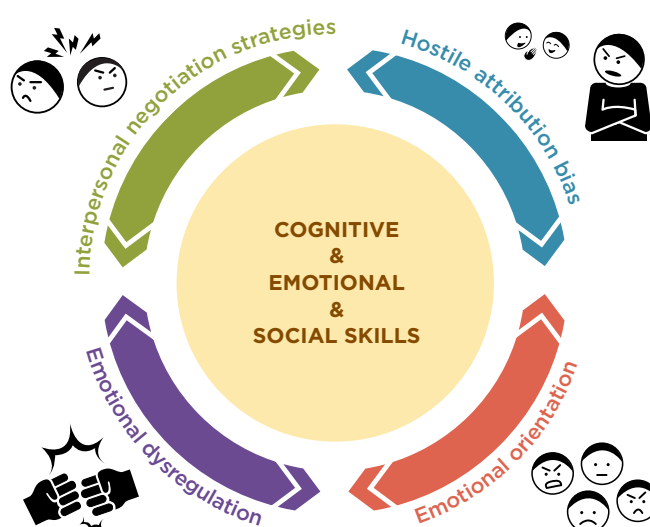
An overview of SERAIS, a measure developed for assessing the impact of social-emotional learning interventions in crisis-contexts

A growing array of stakeholders around the globe are investing in and implementing education programs designed to promote children's social-emotional skills, which include the capacities, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors that help children succeed in school and beyond.¹

School-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programming has been shown across hundreds of studies in primarily Western contexts to be an effective and cost-efficient strategy for improving holistic outcomes for students.² Demonstrating that SEL programs lead to improvements in children's social-emotional skills, however, requires the use of measures that provide accurate data that capture meaningful changes in children's development over time. In contexts affected by crisis and conflict, few measures currently have the evidence required to support their use in program evaluations, limiting stakeholders' ability to determine whether programs are working, how and for whom.

The Social-Emotional Response and Information Scenarios (SERAIS) holds promise for addressing this gap. SERAIS ("I would" in French) employs a scenario-based format in which children are asked to interpret the actions of others and report what they would do and feel in different ambiguous social situations. Responses are designed to capture information about a suite of social, emotional and cognitive skills among children and youth aged 6 to 18 in fragile, conflict-affected settings.

SERAIS was constructed and adapted by researchers at New York University's Global TIES for Children (TIES/NYU) based on formats and items used in prior studies in U.S. and global contexts.³ It was first used as part of an effort to test the impact of the International Rescue Committee's (IRC's) SEL-infused programming in Lebanon on Syrian refugee children's holistic learning skills. The measure has since been further adapted by the IRC's Research and Innovation (R&I) team for use in Nigeria.



SERAIS uses storytelling to measure these four types of SEL skills:

- **Hostile attribution bias** measures the child's cognitive tendency to interpret others' behavior as hostile despite the fact that scenarios are described in neutral ways.
- **Emotional orientation** measures the type and intensity of emotions that the child may experience in socially challenging situations such as anger, sadness and calmness.
- **Emotional dysregulation** measures the child's ability to regulate sadness and anger in socially challenging situations.
- **Interpersonal negotiation strategies** measures the child's inclination to strategies such as verbal aggression, physical aggression, disengagement, appeal to authority, or resolution-oriented strategies, when having to deal with interpersonal conflicts.

This tool was tested in Lebanon in school year 2017-18 with a sample of 3,661 Syrian refugee children aged 5-16 who were enrolled in Lebanese formal schools and had access to IRC programming in the Bekaa and Akkar regions.

How is data collected with SERAIS?

1 Child or data collector reads story:

“Imagine your teacher is handing out pencils. You just got a good spot near the front of the line. Then another student just comes in and stands in front of you, taking your place in line.”

2 Child answers questions about what she would think in that situation:

Do you think the child took your place on purpose or by accident?

On purpose.

Hostile attribution bias

3 Child answers questions about what she would feel and express in that situation:

In this situation, would you feel angry?

A little bit.

Emotional orientation

What would you do next? Would you stomp your feet?

Maybe.

Emotional dysregulation

4 Child answers questions about what she would do in that situation:

Would you push the child out of line?

No.

Interpersonal negotiation strategies

Evidence on the psychometric properties of this version of SERAIS support its use as an outcome measure in program evaluations and in research with Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. Specifically, we provide in the Measurement Library evidence that SERAIS assesses key social and emotional skills reliably. We also provide evidence that the measure functions and is understood in the same way by children with access to SEL programming and those without, as well as by children over time.

SERAIS has been tested thus far for use in program impact evaluations. In addition, the SERAIS User's Guide shows the overall structure and contents of the version of SERAIS tested with Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, its administration processes including time and materials required, scoring system as well as examples of resulting score analysis and interpretation. To help users assess the usability of SERAIS in a particular context, it is packaged with a Decision Tree that offers a step-by-step process of instrument selection and contextualization, as well as a review of important factors to consider in each step.

To facilitate the training of SERAIS administration for enumerators, we include an Enumerator Training material. Finally, all results of our psychometric testing of SERAIS with Syrian refugee children in Lebanon are more fully described in the Evidence Report and technical appendices.

Researchers and practitioners who are interested in using SERAIS in their work need to be mindful that the tool was designed primarily for program evaluation. Thus, SERAIS can be most useful when the assessment purpose involves comparing fine-grained changes or differences among children who did and did not participate in an SEL program, rather than identifying individuals' strengths/weakness for the provision of formative feedback and support, or screening individuals for the inclusion/exclusion of program participation.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Cefai et al., "Strengthening Social and Emotional Education as a Core Curricular Area across the EU: A Review of the International Evidence"; Global Education Monitoring Report, "Education as Healing: Addressing the Trauma of Displacement through Social and Emotional Learning"; INEE, "Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning for Children and Youth in Emergency Settings."

² Taylor et al., "Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions"; Durlak et al., "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning"; Belfield et al., "The Economic Value of Social Emotional Learning."

³ Dodge et al., "Hostile Attributional Bias and Aggressive Behavior in Global Context"; Di Giunta et al., "Measurement Invariance and Convergent Validity of Anger and Sadness Self-Regulation Among Youth From Six Cultural Groups"; Leadbeater et al., "Assessment of Interpersonal Negotiation Strategies in Youth Engaged in Problem Behaviors"; Selman et al., "Assessing Adolescent Interpersonal Negotiation Strategies."