



strengthening
SOCIAL COHESION

Conceptual framing and programming implications

Copyright ©UNDP 2020. All rights reserved.
One United Nations Plaza, NEW YORK, NY 10017, USA

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or the UN Member States.

The designations employed and the presentation of material on maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNDP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Information on uniform resource locators and links to Internet sites contained in the present publication are provided for convenience of the reader and are correct at the time of use. The UNDP takes no responsibility for the continued accuracy of that information or for the content of any external website.

Designed by lsgraphicdesign.it



strengthening **SOCIAL COHESION**

Conceptual framing and programming implications

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms, boxes, case studies and tables.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
Foreword	7
1. Introduction and overview	8
1.1 Strengthening social cohesion.....	11
1.2 Scope and purposes.....	12
2. Conceptual framing: Defining and debating social cohesion	14
2.1 Why social cohesion matters for peace and development.....	17
2.2 Towards conceptual clarity: Dimensions and elements.....	18
2.3 Debating and working with social cohesion.....	21
3. Operationalizing social cohesion and assessment tools	26
3.1 How to assess: Methodologies.....	29
3.2 From concept to measurement: Methods and dimensions.....	30
3.3 Principles and pointers for assessment.....	31
4. Social cohesion, conflict dynamics and peacebuilding	34
4.1 Structures and strains: Pressures on social cohesion.....	37
4.2 Peacebuilding perspective: Theories of change	39
4.3 Practical considerations in strengthening social cohesion	40
5. Social cohesion in practice: Experiences and examples from UNDP.....	41
5.1 Examples of focus areas for social cohesion programmes.....	45
5.1.1 Supporting an inclusive historical narrative	45
5.1.2 Dialogue and mediation processes to improve social cohesion	46
5.1.3 Supporting networks and infrastructures for peace.....	48
5.1.4 Women and youth for social cohesion.....	51
5.1.5 Countering horizontal inequalities	52
5.1.6 Economic recovery, livelihoods and social cohesion.....	52
5.1.7 Social cohesion in migration and displacement.....	55
5.1.8 Local governance and social cohesion.....	56
5.2 Programming challenges and considerations	57
5.3 Monitoring and evaluation considerations.....	59
6. Conclusions and reflections	60
Annexes.....	64
Annex 1: Country-level assessment questionnaire	66
Annex 2: Sample assessment guide: Dimensions, sub-dimensions and indicators.....	70

ACRONYMS, BOXES, CASE STUDIES AND TABLES

ACRONYMS

CDA	Conflict and Development Analysis
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSCAR	Promoting Social Cohesion in the Arab Region (UNDP)
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
SCORE	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
SDG16	Sustainable Development Goal 16
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

BOXES

Box 1	Horizontal dimensions: Bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.....	20
Box 2	Mainstreaming gender in social cohesion assessments.....	29
Box 3	The SCORE index: Social cohesion and reconciliation	32
Box 4	PSCAR: A social cohesion measurement tool for the Arab Region	33
Box 5	Social cohesion in protracted displacement, return and (re)-integration.....	55

CASE STUDIES

Internal mediators helping to build social cohesion in Yemen.....	47
Democratic dialogue to strengthen social cohesion in Latin America	48
Insider mediators and infrastructures for peace in Zimbabwe.....	49
Strengthening social cohesion in a sub-national context in Bangladesh	50
Supporting women's networks for peace	51
Empowerment, participation and cohesion in Southern Thailand.....	54
Strengthening social cohesion between migrants and hosts in Jordan	56
Recovery and peacebuilding in eastern Ukraine.....	58

TABLES

Table 1	Vertical and horizontal social cohesion: Dimensions and elements	22
Table 2	Peacebuilding three levels interaction: leadership, community, and individual levels and approaches	41



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication has been developed by the Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions (CPPRI) team at the Crisis Bureau, UNDP. The lead author is Timothy Sisk, Ph.D., (Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver) under the supervision and guidance of Samuel Rizk, Monica Rijal, Alexandra Wilde, and Henrik Mungenast at UNDP.

This Guidance Note benefitted from substantive inputs and comments from dedicated staff in UNDP's Oslo Governance Center (OGC), UNDP's Regional Hubs, UNDP Country Offices and Headquarters. The development process included two interactive workshops, Oslo (September 2017), Istanbul (May 2018), where a special thank goes to the participants for insights and sharing experiences.



The concept of social cohesion has gained in prominence in recent years as both a goal as well as a programming approach for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in conflict and fragile settings. Notably, the concept continues to be adaptable and fluid depending on its context of usage, and the desired outcome of its employment in particular settings.

To ensure a clear, coherent and joint understanding of the concept, this note represents an important step for UNDP in framing social cohesion, sharing insights and lessons from its past and current usage, and, more importantly, translating it into practice that is measurable and impactful.

This note begins by outlining a rationale for considering social cohesion as a concept and programming approach for development and peace, offering relevant definitions and comparing it to similarly-used concepts (e.g. social capital), and explaining the debate around its recent resurgence in conflict, development and peacebuilding discourse.

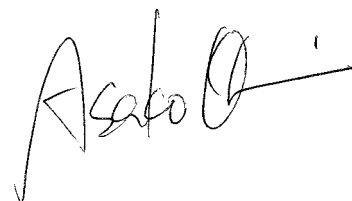
As an expression of the inner workings of a society's social fabric, as well as the vertical relationships between society and authority, the note also touches on another relevant concept: social contract. But rather than remain in conceptual and theoretical space, and to ensure relevance to practitioners, the note explores ways in which social cohesion assessments methodologies and measurements can be developed and adapted for different settings. Theories of change in social cohesion programming are explored and critically assessed and practical considerations are offered to guide more impactful, more integrated policy and programming at different levels of engagement.

Specific programming examples are offered where social cohesion can be useful to different and multiple programmatic approaches in areas such as dialogue and mediation, local governance, women and youth, and infrastructure for peace.

The note concludes by sharing a specific tool and guide for country-level social cohesion assessments that can be adapted and deployed quickly to support analysis (including joint analysis), policy, programming, and partnership.

Given the broad mandate under which UNDP operates, and wide range of partners, a clear understanding and programming of social cohesion action is critical, especially in conflict-affected contexts, but also as prevention tool in places where there are risks of violent conflict. We hope this will be a useful resource for understanding and working with social cohesion, to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Ms. Asako Okai
Assistant Secretary-General
Director, Crisis Bureau
United Nations Development Programme







1

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW



Strengthening social cohesion has become an imperative of the 21st century. As we move into the 2020s, widespread concern exists about worsening conditions of conflict that threaten respect for diversity, inclusivity and fundamental human rights.¹ A sharpening of identity-based tensions, such as ethnic and religious enmity, xenophobia, and resurgent, exclusive nationalism, underlie these conflicts. In April 2019, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres decried this “disturbing groundswell” of strife accelerated, in part, by hate speech and leading to intolerance and violence.²

1 United Nations; World Bank (2018). *Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Conflict*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, pp. 11-47. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>.

2 UN News, *Hatred 'a threat to everyone,' declares Guterres calling for global effort to end xenophobia and 'loathsome rhetoric,'* 4 April 2019, at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1037531>.



Organizations that monitor global conditions on key factors such as minority rights and organized violence trends globally provide strong evidence for the concern sounded by the Secretary-General about the vulnerability of minorities and marginalized groups worldwide to discrimination, exclusion and violence against vulnerable populations.³ Further, violent armed conflicts such as civil wars, violent extremism and radicalization, including terror attacks, and armed violence including murder, kidnapping, and gender-based violence, pose grave threats to sustained peace worldwide. Such conflict, and the absence or erosion of social cohesion that follows in its wake, undermines development, increases insecurities and fears, and leaves countries and contexts vulnerable to further or escalating violence.

To counter these developments, the UN's 2019 Strategy and Plan of Action Against Hate Speech⁴ includes measures that specifically address the scourge of hate-based language on social media. In unveiling the new strategy and plan, the Secretary-General said:

Hate speech is, in itself, an attack on tolerance, inclusion, diversity and the very essence of our human rights norms and principles.... More

broadly, it undermines social cohesion, erodes shared values and can lay the foundation for violence, setting back the cause of peace, stability, sustainable development and the fulfilment of human rights for all.⁵

The Strategy Plan of Action Against Hate Speech is part of overall UN efforts to address the underlying root causes of conflicts that lead to violence and impede realization of human rights and development. The UN is responding at various levels to the ways in which identity-based distrust and enmity threaten to increase vulnerability to violent conflict. Such efforts are organized today around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) to create more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Strengthening social cohesion between citizens and the state, as well as within and across individuals and social groups, is central to SDG16.⁶ It targets responsive and inclusive institutions and representative decision-making, thus speaking directly to the need to strengthen social cohesion. Securing legal identity for all persons, reducing bribery, corruption, and state capture, building capacity to prevent crime, and preventing violent extremism all contribute significantly to strengthening social cohesion.

1.1 STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other development assistance partners are engaged globally in efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace through integrated, conflict-sensitive development programming. UNDP's work on democratic governance and peacebuilding speaks directly to social cohesion. That agenda cuts across the organization's programmes and initiatives in conflict prevention, inclusive political processes, responsive and accountable government, rule of law and access to justice, combatting corruption, pre-

venting violent extremism, working with youth, and HIV and health programmes. UNDP's portfolio of activities in conflict prevention and management, facilitation and dialogue, and consensus-building has been focused on a strategic perspective. That is, strengthening social cohesion, defined as the extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively toward a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals. UNDP initiatives to support infrastructures for peace, prevent violent ex-

3 Minority Rights Group International, *Peoples under Threat 2018*, 13 June 2018, <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Peoples-under-Threat-2016-briefing1.pdf>.

4 For a synopsis of the plan, see <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Hate%20Speech%2018%20June%20SYNOPSIS.pdf>.

5 United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Secretary-General Launches United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action against Hate Speech, Designating Special Adviser on Genocide Prevention as Focal Point*, PI/2264-SOC/4881, 18 June 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/pi2264.doc.htm>

6 For further information on UNDP's efforts to monitor and implement SDG16, see *Monitoring to Implement Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies*. Oslo, at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Monitoring%20to%20Implement%20SDG16_Pilot%20Initiative_main.pdf.



© UNDP Lebanon, Ramzi Haidar, Dar Al Musawwir

tremism and support responsive, inclusive and resilient institutions all relate directly to the goal of strengthening social cohesion.

Achieving this goal is a prerequisite for sustainable development and peaceful societies. Programmes and projects that seek to achieve it have become an important feature of UNDP efforts to address the distrust and challenges of managing difference and diversity. They range from launching dialogue projects to developing local government capacities for consultation and building bridges across communities that focus on common values and common destinies.

UNDP's social cohesion-related programmes and projects aim to provide a basis for conflict prevention and peacebuilding through deeper understanding, dialogue, interaction and interdependency. When societies are more cohesive and channels of dialogue, cooperation and interaction are multiple and multi-layered, efforts to promote hate and highlight differences will not succeed. Thus, building social cohesion also strengthens the resilience of states and societies so that they can change and adapt to 21st century challenges.

This Note provides a conceptual frame and explores the implications for programmes and projects that seek to strengthen social cohesion. Its purpose is to provide a clear conceptual framework for what can be an expansive concept and to offer knowledge and practical guidance in designing effective programmes and projects. Further, it seeks to identify challenges, risks and dilemmas in social cohesion programming and to direct the reader to additional resources, key research and further reading. Last, it addresses these important questions:

- ✎ What is social cohesion and how can this broad, multi-dimensional concept be defined validly, measured reliably and useful operationally?
- ✎ What are the social, economic or political structures and strains that arise from challenges or crises that may undermine or erode social cohesion?
- ✎ How is the concept of social cohesion useful both to understand, contextualize and assess local and regional contexts and to constitute an outcome for UNDP contributions to conflict prevention and peacebuilding?
- ✎ What are the lessons learned and best practices in designing and implementing programmes and projects to strengthen social cohesion as a primary or secondary goal of development programmes and projects?

CHAPTER 2 offers a definition and a conceptual framework for social cohesion, recognizing that it may be adapted to various contexts and is often discussed in different ways in countries and local settings.

CHAPTER 3 offers an overview of approaches and the leading qualitative and quantitative measures for assessing social cohesion. It offers guidance for assessment, with implications for long-term context monitoring and programme/project development.

CHAPTER 4 explores how social cohesion can erode rapidly through polarization and division, thereby enhancing vulnerabilities to violent conflict and undermining peace and development progress, and examines the relationship to peacebuilding.

CHAPTER 5 offers case studies as examples and practical guidance for programming. It presents practitioners' reflections on programmes and project evaluation.

The **APPENDICES** offer readers sample tools to analyse social cohesion through a country-level qualitative assessment guide and a quantitative approach with suggested indicators.





2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMING: DEFINING AND DEBATING SOCIAL COHESION

Much of the value of the concept of social cohesion concept lies in its adaptability and the thinking, debates and descriptions that support discussions of its definition, characteristics and contribution to peace and development. This chapter provides a definition of the concept, while recognizing that in some contexts, the very terminology is sensitive. Indeed, multiple alternative concepts or phrases, such as ‘social stability,’ ‘social integration,’ or ‘social contract,’ may be more acceptable in local contexts. However, a simple definition has value based on its broad applicability:

Social cohesion is the extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively toward a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals.⁷

7 This definition does not connote a formal UNDP definition of the term social cohesion.



A shared vision for a common future and responsive, legitimate governance institutions contribute to economic development in cohesive societies characterized by high levels of trust. Social cohesion is reinforced by inclusive social policies and protection for minorities, disadvantaged groups and elements of society that have been marginalized historically. It can be sustainable in the long-term only if the principle of respect for diversity is integrated into the society. A 2009 UNDP report on social cohesion in the context of promoting community security found that “social cohesion is about tolerance

of, and respect for, diversity (in terms of religion, ethnicity, economic situation, political preferences, sexuality, gender and age) – both institutionally and individually.”⁸ In 2015, UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Arab States launched a regional project that seeks to promote social cohesion through peacebuilding, emphasis on equal citizenship, trust between citizens and the state and among diverse populations, and mitigation of sectarian or confessional strife. This initiative will also develop new measures and approaches for assessing social cohesion, as described in Chapter 3.⁹

2.1

WHY SOCIAL COHESION MATTERS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Research in sociology, economics, political science and social psychology suggests that cohesive societies are likelier to have better individual health outcomes, greater income equality and more extensive social support and protection systems. Cohesive societies may reflect stronger citizenship norms and experience greater levels of institutionalized and responsive governance and, potentially, support for democracy and popular participation. More recently, social cohesion has been used as an objective to overcome fragility and counter violence and extremism by staving off polarization, political radicalism and identity-based differences.¹⁰ Thus, the concept serves commonly both to describe a context and to identify an outcome of development assistance programming and projects. In the latter case, it may be a primary result – e.g. a facilitated dialogue process – or a secondary one – e.g. strengthened intergroup trust built by participating in a community-level water-sharing initiative.

Based on this focus on trust in government, social cohesion is also strongly linked to the broader aims of post-war and post-crisis recovery to strengthen inclusive, resilient and responsive state capacities. From managing host-immigrant tensions in European cities to fostering a common Lebanese identity, to building peace from the bottom up in

the Central African Republic, social cohesion appears to apply widely to the underlying social dynamics that lead to peaceful and inclusive societies.¹¹ Its characteristics are evident and often quite immediately recognizable as a feature of the ‘everyday’ in social interactions.

- ▾ **Cohesive societies reflect everyday civility and respect and protect the rights of all.** Such societies foster relationships across ethnicity, religion, class, neighborhood and region. Trust and interdependence, which are core attributes of cohesion, contribute to personal and collective security through shared norms. Greater cohesion may facilitate more consensus-oriented or inclusive governance, as individuals and interests may have greater empathy and understanding for others’ interests and well-being. Finally, social cohesion and inclusivity in economic, social and civil political participation reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour and individual alienation that can lead to violent extremism.
- ▾ Where a sense of a shared vision of the future exists, **social cohesion creates resilience to escalating conflict at the individual level, which often ensues from contentious politics and, at times, social mobilization based on identity.**

8 UNDP, 2009. *Community Security and Social Cohesion: Toward a UNDP Approach*, p.14.

9 “*Developing a Social Cohesion Index for the Arab Region*.” Background Methodological Paper, April 2017, http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/Sustainable_development/developing-a-social-cohesion-index-for-the-arab-region.html.

10 Marc, Alexandre, Alys Willman, Ghazia Aslam and Michelle Rebosio. 2012. *Societal Dynamics and Fragility: Engaging Societies in Responding to Fragile Situations*, Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2012. <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/978-0-8213-9656-8>.

11 Brown, Michael J. and Marie-Joëlle Zahar. “Social Cohesion as Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic and Beyond,” *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 10: 1 (2015): 10-24.



Concepts related to social cohesion, such as reconciliation, are equally important to understand and measure in countries emerging from conflict.

While this Note addresses social cohesion, tools like SCORE (Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index) link social cohesion and reconciliation.

2.2

TOWARDS CONCEPTUAL CLARITY: DIMENSIONS AND ELEMENTS

Social cohesion is a complex, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. Moreover, its underlying conceptual basis is contested. Cohesion may evolve in primarily historical-cultural terms; that is, norms of trust and belonging have evolved together over time through symbolic politics and patterns of long-term state and nation formation.

Alternatively, cohesion may evolve more rationally or functionally. In this analysis, social cohesion arises from networks of interactions, such as economic exchanges and interdependencies. Thus, trust and tolerance may arise from mutually beneficial economic exchanges and practical, everyday interactions. Moreover, definitions have proliferated as international organizations, international financial institutions, governments and non-governmental organizations have focused increasingly on the term.

Disciplines such as sociology, psychology, law, human communication studies, political science, economics and anthropology have produced an in-depth academic literature on social cohesion. The term is closely related to several other concepts in these fields, so for conceptual clarity, it is useful to define these concepts. Social capital and social contracts are the most similar or closely related.

Social capital is typically understood as the accumulation of trust and willingness to cooperate in a society, based on past experiences of cooperative interactions, networks and ties, and mutually beneficial economic exchange. Social capital is an asset held by both individuals and communities. Box 1 below further defines three types of social capital: bonding (within or inward-oriented); bridging (across divisions); and linking, which refers to those who serve as ‘connectors’ in society and whose relationships are seen as symbolically important, such as religious leaders who participate in interfaith dialogue and work.

The **social contract** is another closely-related term. Social contracts are understood both in legal-formal terms, for example, as reflected in a constitution, and in everyday terms, to describe formal and informal rules for living together. UNDP’s work on social contracts suggests that the more inclusive a social contract, the more resilient it is when communities face economic or social stress that contributes to conflict drivers.¹²

In UNDP-related practice, social cohesion may be described along two main dimensions: vertical and horizontal. Both include objective and subjective aspects. The horizontal dimension may also be described in terms of bonding, bridging and linking social capital.

VERTICAL

The **vertical dimension** represents trust between government and society. This includes trust in political, economic or social leaders, institutions, and processes such as elections, access to justice, taxation, budgeting, and the delivery of public services. The vertical dimension, which focuses on the state, involves cohesion among citizens, where perceptions and behaviours reflect loyalty, broad legitimacy, trust, and confidence in national, sub-national or local state actors, institutions and processes. Along this vertical dimension, social relations are deeply affected by political dynamics and, particularly, control of the state. When one ethnic group ‘captures’ the state and wields power to enhance its status or dominance, this creates a risk of violence by those who are excluded or disadvantaged. Thus, concepts such as the social contract may be seen as a coercive, rather than consent-based, basis for living together.

¹² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2018. Forging Resilient Social Contracts: A Pathway to Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace: Summary Findings. http://www.socialcontractsforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UNDP-Preventing-Violent-Conflict-FINAL_WEB.pdf.





© UNDP/Voz di Paz Guinea-Bissau

While societal relations and intergroup trust are essential to the concept of social cohesion, the state also affects ethnic relations. Public policy shapes, alters and informs relations among groups at the local level.¹³ The state's delivery of services is critical in many contexts. For example, if education, health care, environmental protection or clean water are provided effectively, the state is perceived to be fair and just. The police, security forces and justice system are often the most contentious areas. If they are perceived as biased and discriminatory, social cohesion can erode quickly.

In relation to democratic processes - for instance, the electoral system or the spatial distribution of votes - political institutions may provide incentives that endorse inclusivity and multicultural coalitions or, conversely, incite fear to win votes. Ethnic appeals in elections have long been identified as a source of polarization when political elites 'outbid' each other for supporters. Intra-group conflict can have a strong detrimental effect on inter-group relations.¹⁴ Thus, as the focus on

hate speech in the introduction suggests, the vertical dimension of cohesion relates strongly to the inclusivity of government and its institutions.

HORIZONTAL

The **horizontal dimension** describes the trust, relationships and interactions among people in a society across divisions such as identity or other social constructs, including race or class. The horizontal dimension, which is society-centered, involves cohesion among citizens, reflected in the extent to which civil society, social organizations and institutions (such as religious institutions) exhibit trust and a sense of interdependence and common destiny.

Horizontal social cohesion may be evaluated further based on the type of social capital: bonding, bridging and linking (see Box 1). Levels of social trust are not entirely culturally determined or based on rational

¹³ For a recent academic analysis of the concepts and approach below, see Cox, Fletcher D. & Timothy D. Sisk (Eds.) 2017. *Peacebuilding in Deeply Divided Societies: Toward Social Cohesion?* (London: Palgrave).

¹⁴ The literature on the role of elite construction of "ethnic conflict" is vast. For a cogent and accessible review of this broader literature, see Cordelle, Karl and Stephan Wolff, (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook on Ethnic Conflict*, 2nd. Edition, Abingdon: Routledge, (Cordell and Wolff, 2016).



BOX 1

HORIZONTAL DIMENSIONS: BONDING,
BRIDGING, AND LINKING SOCIAL CAPITAL

BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL is a primarily within-group form of capital; for instance, reflected in a group's common symbols, rituals, markers, slogans or cultural practices. In-group bonding creates trust and commitment. It can be seen within ethnic groups, religious communities, gangs or sports fans who share a sense of commonality and trust that produces a "kin-like" sense of loyalty and attachment. Internal cohesion within groups may be both harmless and meaningful; for example, nationalism in global sporting competitions that reflects pride in one's country and culture and respect for the opposing team.

BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL, on the other hand, refers to dense networks or organizations that cut across group lines, such as civil society groups that advocate for progressive social change on issues that bridge traditional lines of difference. When such bridging networks and relationships are present, cross-communal mobilization and crisis management is more likely to prevent conflict escalation.

Social capital also features **LINKING**, or networks and relationships such as "insider mediators," who can communicate, cooperate and collaborate to prevent conflicts from escalating if group tensions flare. For example, social cohesion is seen in entities including inter-faith religious councils in contexts such as Nepal, Kenya and South Africa. In those settings, the visual symbols of cooperation and common destiny that an inter-faith council represents underpin social norms of tolerance along lines of religion and belief. Linking social capital thus represents the nexus or institutions, organizations and leaders that work across lines of historical difference.

For further background on social capital, see the World Bank's "Social Capital Working Paper Series," at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/docsearch/collection-title/Social%20Capital%20Initiative%20working%20paper%20series>

choice; rather, the internal characteristics of different combinations of political and social institutions either foster or suppress social trust. Greater social cohesion suggests that locally-grounded networks and trust exist within society, capable of managing conflicts and preventing tensions from escalating.

In situations of ethnic power-sharing, for example in Lebanon, Bosnia or Northern Ireland, internal social cohesion within groups may well be necessary for effective cross-group cooperation, while within-group fragmentation may inhibit effective power-sharing and cross-community cooperation. The assessment of whether and when such bonding or primarily intra-group social cohesion is inherently 'bad,' 'good' or somewhere in between depends on the context.

Both the vertical and horizontal dimensions include objective and subjective elements. **Objective elements** are found in concrete actions of cooperation and par-

ticipation, from the marketplace to organizational life, and behaviour in political and associational life and interpersonal spheres. Networks are essential elements of the objective dimension. Social cohesion has often been evaluated by analysing the extent to which organizations are inclusive.

Subjective elements focus on the values, attitudes and the beliefs that social actors develop toward the state and other ethnic and religious groups within the state. This focus on individual capacities examines values, norms, and beliefs. Approaches to preventing violent extremism have often focused on this level of analysis.



UN agencies are deeply engaged in international efforts to prevent violent conflicts through initiatives, programmes and projects designed specifically to strengthen social cohesion as an essential component of country and regional initiatives to sustain peace.¹⁵ One common understanding of social cohesion arises from these experiences: patterns and understanding of social cohesion vary by context, particularly in those characterized by high levels of human insecurity and divisive state institutions. In many instances, groups renegotiate unique forms of power-sharing and ways to resolve grievances, live together in relative peace and coexist, even with former enemies. This may occur with or without assistance from the state or international actors and the state itself may be dominated by one group or another.

Social cohesion may well be a contested concept within countries and contexts, subject to a wide variety of interpretations that may or may not conform to UN human rights values in spirit. Such differences are normal and, when managed, become part of the ongoing, collective re-creation of a society's values, orientations and purposes. When handled peacefully, differences and agreements to disagree about the past become a common or collective effort to envisage a more prosperous and collectively successful common or shared destiny, based on core values and perspectives.

The term and concept of social cohesion may be highly politicized, both at the horizontal and vertical levels. For example, in the Arab region, governments seem quite dismissive of the concept as it assumes that societies are fragmented and that state institutions treat all citizens alike, without favouritism or bias. Typically, national and locally-owned consultative processes allow practitioners to ensure that the purposes, dimensions and measures for assessing social cohesion are appropriate to the context and, thereby, effective. Additionally, an open discussion with decision-makers would de-politicize the social cohesion agenda, so it becomes an agenda for peacebuilding and developing consensus, rather than one that high-

lights divisions and institutional dysfunctionalities.

Although a strong link exists between peaceful societies and high levels of social cohesion, a debate also exists as to whether social cohesion is 'good' or, potentially, 'bad' for sustainable peace. Cohesion may be seen as synonymous with control, understood to refer to bonding relationships within a dominant group, rather than to a bridge across divides that can bring all within the boundaries of the community. As a result, the concept may be misused by those whose vision of cohesion may involve, for example, forced assimilation of minorities, sub-national identities and differences or ethnic cleansing. Autocratic regimes may take a coercive approach to national social cohesion, using reference to symbols, acts or participation to rally the nation around an ideological vision.

It is critically important to recognize when social cohesion is imposed through coercion or force. The concept of social cohesion is strongly related to ideology; that is, a set of values and symbols that provide collective meaning. However, we must consider concerns about nationalism and the possibility that cohesion may be built along narrow, exclusivist political lines. It is thus important to explore those ideas and ideologies that have developed historically and have imposed a collective identity that fails to capture the diversity within societies. Some have emphasized the problematic pursuit of cohesion in countries facing deep-seated patterns of socioeconomic inequality, political exclusion, discrimination along group lines, dominance by one community or a single community's hijacking of political decisionmaking – and their implications for displays of cultural diversity.

However, if social cohesion is to be sustainable, **it must emerge organically.** It must be based on underlying norms that reflect a willingness to live and work together. The history, cultural processes and communication dimensions of cohesion are important. Terms such as social integration, harmony and solidarity must be understood within local contexts. On occasion, local

15 In 2016, the UN Security Council endorsed the sustaining peace concept (as recommended in a prior review of the evolution of the UN's peacebuilding architecture) and provided an institutional definition of the meaning and scope of sustaining peace:

A goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.

UN Security Council Resolution 2282 A/70/714-S/2016/115. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12340.doc.htm>.



TABLE I

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL SOCIAL COHESION: DIMENSIONS AND ELEMENTS

VERTICAL SOCIAL COHESION



The vertical (state-centered) dimension refers to cohesion among citizens where perceptions and behaviours reflect trust in state institutions, confidence in national, sub-national or local state actors, institutions and processes, and a commitment to laws, institutions and a common or shared future.



HORIZONTAL SOCIAL COHESION



The horizontal (society-centered) dimension refers to cohesion among citizens and within and between groups (inter-group dynamics). This is reflected in the extent to which civil society, social organizations and institutions (such as religious institutions) exhibit trust and a sense of interdependence, overarching identity/belonging and common destiny.



OBJECTIVE ELEMENTS

- Personal and family safety and security. Legitimate and capable government with a transparent, accountable public administration
- Responsive governance institutions that deliver services fairly across social groups
- Functioning rule of law with legal frameworks that articulate the rights of minorities and marginalized groups
- Inclusive institutions mandated to monitor and enforce norms of inclusivity and rejection of discrimination, exclusion, scapegoating or xenophobia
- Civic space for formal engagement, political change, interaction, voicing concerns and demanding accountability in society

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENTS

- Perceived access to justice
- Voice and participation
- Citizens acknowledge legitimacy of existing formal and informal structures and institutions through their trust in actors and institutions

OBJECTIVE ELEMENTS

- Inclusive societies: social, economic and cultural (e.g. language) participation
- Cross-cutting social networks and relationships
- Inter-community ethnic, sectarian, religious, and ethnic group relationships in society: social norms and practices of diversity and inclusivity
- Rituals, memorials or cultural icons devoted to inclusivity and multiculturalism

SUBJECTIVE ELEMENTS

- Inclusive visions of the nation and community, shared norms, values, acceptance and tolerance
- Trust in and acceptance of the 'other,' perceptions of belonging
- Attitudes: recognition, tolerance and affirmation of minorities and communities, social distance
- Symbolic communication: common narratives in culture, music, art and sports that reinforce a sense of commonality and inclusive solidarity



terms, such as the South African *Ubuntu*, have been used to convey social cohesion. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu helped to popularize it in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which he co-chaired.¹⁶ In the Americas, terms such as social solidarity are used to express the need to address the region's patterns of socio-economic inequality. The concept and claim of 'indigenous' is often contested, for example in relation to the application of global norms, such as the International Labor Organization's ILO Convention 169 (Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention) and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The interpretation of social cohesion and its meaning in terms of loyalty, conformity or expected behaviour are often contested. For UNDP, such contestations must relate to the body of global norms that emphasize inclusion, acceptance, recognition, freedom of religion and belief and respect for all individuals. Social cohesion may also relate to social, cultural and economic rights. Thus, interpretations of social cohesion should incorporate a number of key principles, including non-discrimination and effective equality of citizens, respect for human rights (including minority rights), recognition of diversity and individuals' multiple identities based on social context, the primacy of voluntary self-identification, and shared institutions and public spaces. To realize these principles, institutions, laws, and policies should ensure non-discrimination, full equality, participation in political, social, and economic life, cultural and religious freedom of belief, and policies to protect language diversity, equal access to education and justice, and freedom of expression.

✎ In developing a project related to social cohesion, practitioners recommend **beginning with nationally- and locally-owned processes and contextualization**. National and local stakeholders should be involved from the start and should have a voice on concepts and definitions. To ensure conflict sensitivity, approaches to social cohesion should be developed together with governments and other national counterparts, drawing on UNDP's Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) toolkit¹⁷ (2016) and the United Nations Development Group's (UNDG) Conflict

and Development Analysis (CDA) tool.¹⁸ Developing a shared approach also requires careful insight and thoughtful, collaborative and locally-sensitive approaches to engagement.

- ✎ Local and national actors can contribute directly to methodology, for example, in framing questionnaires, if they are used. Assessing social cohesion **requires a deep historical, cultural, sociological and economic analysis** with a high degree of sensitivity to both objective measures and perceptions or subjective aspects. Some social theorists, such as Pierre Bourdieu, have long criticized the social cohesion concept, arguing that pursuing it may reinforce structures of inequality.
- ✎ It is important to gain a shared understanding that **social cohesion is not a fixed endpoint but, rather, a dynamic and evolving state** that fluctuates with events, relationships and attitudes. It is often critical to develop a new vocabulary to redefine shared destiny in a specific context and the steps required to ensure that cohesion is sustainable in the long run. In contexts such as Nepal or South Africa, for example, this has involved a shared norm of transformation, which recognizes a shared destiny even as the society addresses the underlying social structures or differences that undermine cohesion. In both instances, a 'New Nepal' or a 'New South Africa' emerged as a common understanding of the transition from conflict to democracy, in which cultural competence, local knowledge and an understanding of local informal and formal institutions are essential. A forward-leaning, visioning perspective can help steer discussions toward the ideal community and ways to collaborate. As always, ownership of the definition of social cohesion is essential to its acceptance.
- ✎ In meetings with stakeholders, social cohesion should be framed in a way that emphasizes its nature as an organic process that cannot be imposed. The process calls for a **focus on shared values and commonalities** that bind the society across internal lines of division. The strongest of those values and commonalities are the equality of individuals in society and the mutual recognition of the dignity, worth

16 On the meaning and application of *Ubuntu*, see the work of the Desmond Tutu Foundation at <http://www.tutufoundationusa.org/2015/04/29/what-is-ubuntu/>.

17 UNDP (2016). *Preventing Violent Extremism: Through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance, and Respect for Diversity*. New York: UNDP. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/global-policy-centres/oslo_governance_centre/pve.html.

18 United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (2016). *Conducting a Conflict and Development Analysis*. New York: UNDG. https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDP_CDA-Report_v1.3-final-opt-low.pdf.





© UNDP PAPP

and belongingness of all groups. In the end, sustainable conceptualizations of social cohesion may well take a rights-based perspective that incorporates principles of minority rights, freedom of religion and belief, and the dignity and respect of all persons as reflected in international human rights law.

- Analysis should emphasize **arenas and institutions** for defining social cohesion, recognizing differences between rhetoric and realities and engaging in evidence-based analysis of society, networks and relationships. Analysis also helps to create an understanding of local drivers and specific conflict vulnerabilities. The Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA), a joint World Bank, UN and European Union undertaking, represents a partnership-based approach to analysis. It provides evidenced-based approaches and a shared understanding with partners, including the host government. An RPBA produces assessments, plans and recovery priorities to help create a political process for reaching a shared understanding, including an understanding of how social cohesion fits into overall recovery aims and objectives.

In sum, sustainable social cohesion means advancing the values of UN norms on fundamental human rights: dignity of the person, human security, and opportunities for individual and collective development. Social cohesion will remain elusive in contexts characterized by intolerance, coerced integration or a litany of other historical wrongs perpetrated in the name of an exclusive or non-rights-based definition of a common destiny. In today's multicultural settings, social cohesion does not arise from the coercive assimilation of many cultures into a single, dominant one. Rather, it emerges from legitimate and effective mechanisms that protect diversity and advance dialogue and dispute resolution.





3

CHAPTER 3

OPERATIONALIZING SOCIAL COHESION AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS



A common debate around social cohesion focuses on how its is **operationalized and measured**. How can such a broad and potentially unwieldy concept be analysed and measured accurately, particularly when localized patterns of cohesion may differ widely? Assessment tools and approaches to social cohesion are essential to monitor whether a society is becoming polarized or unified. Increasingly, existing data on social and economic conditions can be combined with analyses of public conversations, or narratives, to explore the nature and dynamics of cohesion.

Assessments are typically conducted for two main reasons. First, they may inform development programming to identify social structures, networks and local context. They help to define programmes' theories of change, appropriate entry points and other design characteristics.

Second, social cohesion assessments are used to develop sophisticated quantitative or index measures, used to monitor the level of cohesion and its increase or decrease. These measures are linked directly to a programme's/project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

framework. The information can be used to establish baselines, examine changes over time and, thus, evaluate the effects of interventions.

Third, assessment can help capture inter-group dynamics and groups' perceptions of various issues. Existing global, regional or local databases rarely do so today.

This section provides guidance on the components of social cohesion and of analytic and measurement methods, also emphasizing the importance of gender mainstreaming.

3.1

HOW TO ASSESS: METHODOLOGIES

Social cohesion assessments in country and community contexts typically adopt a holistic approach to assessment. This involves: a deep knowledge of the historical context and the often multiple narratives of origin, values, symbols, and events; evaluation of structural factors, such as spatial settlement patterns, socio-economic inequalities and home-language use; and, research into contemporary orientations, beliefs, and attitudes. As described below, tools such as UNDP's social cohesion index for the Arab Region or the SCORE (Social Cohesion and Reconciliation) approach used mixed methodologies to develop a valid and reliable approach to assessment. Increasingly, such assessment methods are also paired with geographic information to identify sub-national or community-level variations in social cohesion.

Several different and equally useful methodologies to analyse social cohesion also contribute to the overall assessment process. Some methods developed recently focus on quantitative indices of social cohesion. The advantage of creating an index is that it can be measured over time and its components may be evaluated, as well. Methodological approaches include the following, which may be combined to adapt to a given context.

- **Qualitative approaches:** Qualitative approaches, such as interviews and focus groups, help reveal the narrative and nature of social cohesion through perceptions and interactions. Qualitative assessments prompt users to explore questions that can help reveal the communicative or constructive aspects of cohesion as found in narratives, symbols or expressions.
- **Participatory approaches:** While many approaches to evaluating social cohesion rely on outsiders, experts or contracted researchers to conduct the analysis, participatory assessment approaches may

help adjust for the biases of outsiders and reveal relationships and networks that are not readily visible to them.

BOX 2

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN SOCIAL COHESION ASSESSMENTS

Gender mainstreaming is essential to effective assessments. In times of violent conflict, women and men often experience the effects of conflict differently. Any approach to assessing social cohesion should include a gender lens to capture the different realities of women, men, boys and girls. Assessments may reflect on these questions, which relate to the gender aspect of social cohesion.

- Where do women and men tend to have influence in different aspects of community life? What are the characteristics of influential women and men? (seniority/ mothers/ wealth/ male sons/ religious)
- What are the common interests among women and men, respectively, across dividing lines and how can those interests connect them?
- What are the idealized characteristics of masculinity and male roles? How can they be leveraged to support peace?
- How do women and men experience exclusion and inclusion politically, socially, and economically?
- What do women and men, respectively, perceive the benefits of social cohesion to be?



- Quantitative approaches: Quantitative approaches have proliferated in recent years, with different actors developing definitions, defined sub-dimensions, and identified data and indicators. Index approaches may be useful as a more objective approach to assessment to address politicized and socially sensitive issues in a more neutral manner.

It should be noted that quantitative assessments, such as indices, are paired with approaches to studying nar-

rative, symbols, and meaning-making (such as through memorials or commemorations). Qualitative analysis, e.g. narrative or content analysis, contributes to an understanding of the underlying stories about the history, purpose and, often, ‘chosen traumas’ of countries and communities. Thus, qualitative research approaches can help further illuminate an understanding of the narrative and relationships that inform mindsets, cultural understandings and visions of the past that shape attitudes and behaviours in the present.

3.2

FROM CONCEPT TO MEASUREMENT: METHODS AND DIMENSIONS

High-quality context assessments of social cohesion often feature a mixed-methods approach and practitioners and researchers have used a variety of methods to assess it. Today, they are closely linked to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks. The existing methods that UNDP uses include SCORE (Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index) and PSCAR (Promoting Social Cohesion in the Arab Region). Cyprus, Liberia and Ukraine have used SCORE. Practitioners have also used other existing tools, such as CDA, to explore the dimensions of social cohesion, possibly together with other tools.

The following is a set of dimensions of a social cohesion model. The dimensions are related to the theory of change in terms of how these attributes contribute to social cohesion and to peaceful and inclusive societies. Combining various dimensions and articulating the causal theory behind their relationship with social cohesion and, ultimately, to sustaining peace is central to building an operational model to assess social cohesion.

Trust is essential to the social cohesion concept. It may be defined broadly as a sentiment or personal attribute (trusting someone or an institution) or as a rational expectation of exchange or reciprocity (trust that mutual commitments will be made). Trust may be seen in political life, as in acceptance of the legitimacy of institutions or policies (such as taxation). Trust may also be seen in features of everyday social life, such as markets. The opposite of trust is suspicion, or perceptions of fear.¹⁹

Belonging, or a common or shared destiny based on shared values and loyalties, is also essential to the concept of social cohesion. The notion of togetherness is common to many definitions of social cohesion. Concepts of togetherness include cultural and national identities, which may be constructed over time to be more or less inclusive.

Inclusion in economic, social and political spheres. Social cohesion in today’s multi-ethnic, multi-religious, class-differentiated and post-colonial/post-immigration societies reflects an inclusive vision based on tolerance and pluralism. Inclusion means collective inclusion or non-exclusion based on identity. However, inclusion is an individual choice, not an obligation. Individuals are encouraged to partake and share, but are not forced to do so. Genuinely cohesive societies thus differ from societies in which identity is defined by the state and inclusion, as such, is a result of coercion or a requirement.

Interdependence, or mutual reliance in economic networks or social interactions (for example, in associational life of civil society or organizations that cut across identity lines).

Human security, or perceptions of safety and satisfaction of essential human needs, such as food security, livelihoods and freedom from violence and crime.

Negative stereotypes is a measure that captures the extent to which individuals consider members of adversarial groups to be, for example, aggressive, trustwor-

¹⁹ “Trust” is a challenging dimension to measure. For further detail on the conceptual and methodological considerations in measuring trust, see: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2015). *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust*. Paris: OECD. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264278219-en.pdf?expires=1578996747&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=IEBIADA8C5B20A3D87FAE5DI5B6FBDCC>.



thy, not hardworking, ‘unclean’ or unfriendly.

Intergroup anxiety measures whether individuals expect to feel threatened, uneasy or anxious (or other negative emotions) if they found themselves alone with members of adversarial groups.

Social distance measures the acceptance of a variety of social relationships with members of an adversarial group; for example: having a member of the other group as a close relative by marriage, as a next-door neighbour, as a co-worker or as a boss, etc.

Perceptions of social threat measures the extent to which individuals consider their own group’s way of life to be potentially threatened by adversarial groups. Active discrimination refers to explicitly discriminatory behaviour towards members of adversarial groups.

Positive feeling measures the extent to which individuals have warm feelings about members of another group.

Cultural distance measures the extent to which respondents feel that aspects of their own culture are dissimilar to aspects of the culture of another ethnic group. Cultural elements may include music, food, values, and

religious and spiritual beliefs.

Propensity for forgiveness measures the extent to which respondents feel that the way to resolve a dispute is to forgive the other side.

Propensity for retribution measures the extent to which respondents feel that the only way to conclude a dispute is through retribution.

Intergroup contact measures the amount of interaction a respondent has with members of an adversarial group.

An assessment model may be developed by combining the research methods mentioned above and the most relevant dimensions in a given context. SCORE and PSCAR are two models with well-developed methodologies that can be used and adapted to any country or context, whether developed or used in relation to UNDP’s realities and programmes.

SCORE developed a model to capture both social cohesion and the related concept of reconciliation, based on dimensions of social cohesion. SCORE is designed to measure progress toward greater social cohesion and reconciliation, not just their nature and extent.

3.3

PRINCIPLES AND POINTERS FOR ASSESSMENT

A summary of assessment principles and pointers for assessment is presented below. It offers conclusions based on practitioners’ experiences regarding the dimensions, elements, and methods above.

Pay attention to concept validity. Concept validity refers to designing a definition and assessment model that integrates the ‘givens’ of historical evolution, its associated ideologies, the ways in which the nation, geography and social environment are articulated, and patterns of spatial settlement. Developing a definition of social cohesion – and clearly distinguishing among this concept and related concepts, such as social capital and social contracts – is essential as assessment involves deep understanding. Working with historians, geographers, urban planners, environmental groups, cultural and religious leaders and obtaining people’s views and beliefs, is important to develop a locally-relevant concept as the basis for measurement. For UNDP to support efforts, cohesion must also be consistent with the SDG values and norms.

Methodology matters (a lot); most comprehensive assessments involve mixed methods. Assessment is difficult, even with a well-thought-out concept of social

cohesion. While it may be appealing to treat quantitative data (such as an index) as fact, it is important to scrutinize the quality of the measurement. For example, in survey research – which is typically used to evaluate core concepts such as trust – reliability may be compromised by participant understanding and truthfulness (including confidentiality), the quality of the survey instrument used, data collection and potential sampling bias. Qualitative methods may have advantages as to the subjective aspects of social cohesion and for understanding the narratives that shape politics, social relations and organizational life.

Include dimensions and indicators that lend themselves to measurement over time. This is critical to develop trend lines and possible use as an early warning instrument for polarization. Such measures should be highly sensitive to diversity, age and gender.



BOX 3

THE SCORE INDEX: SOCIAL COHESION AND RECONCILIATION

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) uses face-to-face interview methods to gather data on social cohesion and reconciliation, together with demographic data. The SCORE approach was initially developed in Cyprus and has been used or piloted in Bosnia, Liberia and Nepal. This methodology can be used both to develop programmes and evaluate progress. The SCORE index was developed by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) and UNDP. It is described as a tool to measure **social cohesion** and **reconciliation** as two indicators of peace in multi-ethnic societies and how these change over time.

SCORE uses a consultative process with local stakeholders and national partners when determining the most important dimensions of social cohesion and reconciliation, i.e., when creating an index for a certain context.

The SCORE evaluation of social cohesion is based on measuring:

- **Trust in institutions:** the extent to which people trust important institutions, such as the judicial system, parliament and the police.
- **Feeling adequately represented by institutions:** people's views on how institutions, such as parliament, represent their concerns and whether people are part of the decision-making process.

- **Human security:** how secure people feel in their everyday lives, in terms of personal security (feeling safe from violence), economic security (having a secure basic income, being able to meet their needs) and political security (the ability to associate freely and express their own views).

- **Satisfaction with civic life:** satisfaction with various elements of public life, including, for example, the administration of justice, the state of the economy and the direction of peace talks.

- **Freedom from corruption:** the extent to which people perceive public life to be free from corruption.

- **Satisfaction with personal life:** satisfaction with life in general; for example, personal life, work life and health status.

- **Ethnic group identification:** the importance to an individual's identity of membership in a group. Participants are asked whether being a part of their chosen group is important to their self-image and something that they felt glad about.

- **Civic engagement:** levels of involvement in civic life; for example, participating in political protest or belonging to a political party or other organizations.

Source: www.scoreforpeace.org

Indices are highly valuable, even if the methods may be challenged. They offer an opportunity to establish a baseline for the dimensions of social cohesion and to track changes in cohesion over the long term. Measurements may also be taken at the national level and duplicated at the local level (e.g. in cities where social cohesion is highly neighbourhood-specific) and they can be compared across sub-national locations. Researchers may find such indices especially valuable in exploring causal relationships.

Some practitioners point out that **index-type assessment can be risky** because stakeholders may use the

data or analysis for political purposes. An index approach may also be criticized as representing only an outsider's observations.

Innovative information and communications technology offer considerable promise for developing new approaches to social cohesion assessment. They are only now starting to use the following: monitoring and evaluating social media discourse; constructing geo-referenced indices using geographic information systems (GIS); and conducting online surveys using secure web-based portals. Such approaches offer important opportunities to understand the changing nature of social cohe-



BOX 4

PSCAR: A SOCIAL COHESION MEASUREMENT TOOL FOR THE ARAB REGION

Promoting Social Cohesion in the Arab Region (PSCAR) is an initiative to counter the non-inclusive aspects of political, economic and social institutions. It captures the challenges of diversity and identity that have arisen in the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly since the Arab uprisings of 2011. PSCAR starts from the premise that a history of exclusion, inequality and neglect is at the root of the region's conflicts. Begun in 2015, the initiative advances peacebuilding, equal citizenship, respect for human rights, economic and social equality, and respect for different faiths, sects and religious traditions.

The goal of the social cohesion index is to understand the present state of social cohesion, track its future improvement or deterioration, and better understand the factors that affect it. The index describes social situations and geographical mapping to identify hot spots and to test predictive models of attitudes and collective actions.

The PSCAR methodological paper offers a well-developed instrument for a social cohesion index, including a questionnaire. In addition, it offers definitions and explanations of several dimensions of social cohesion. A useful list of criteria for questionnaire design, developed for UNDP-relevant contexts, makes it possible to adapt the instrument to new contexts.

PSCAR's Index takes a three-tiered approach:

1. Peripheral indicators

- Threat perceptions
- Contact – quantitative and qualitative
- Justice perceptions
- Human security (personal, social-community, economic, political)

2. Medial indicators

- Identity dynamics (multi-level measures)
- Emotions – positive, neutral, negative
- Perceptions of trust (social trust, trust in government/state institutions)

3. Core indicators

- Horizontal and vertical attitudes
- Horizontal and vertical collective action

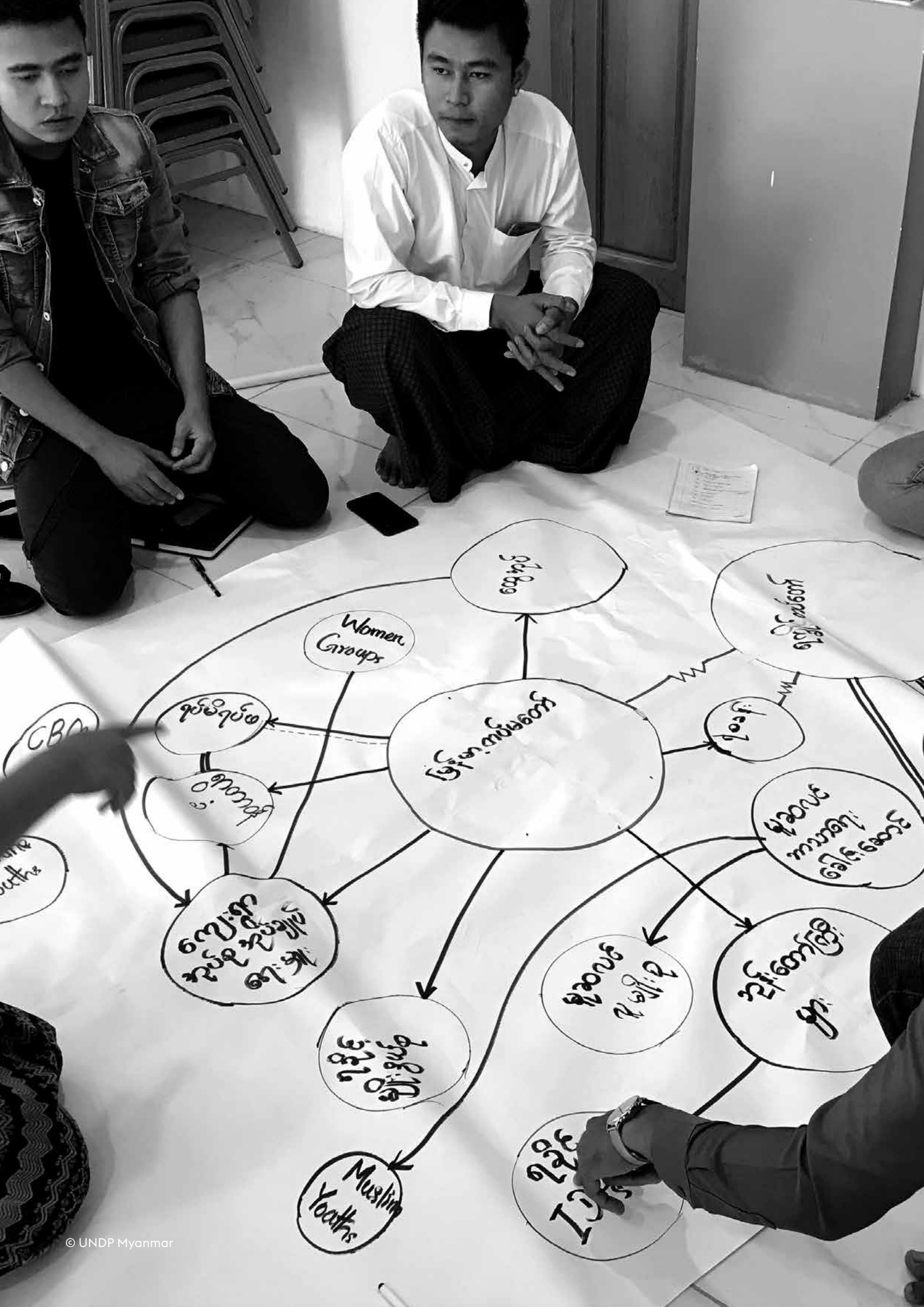
See the methodological paper, *Developing a social cohesion index for the Arab region*, at: http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/Sustainable_development/developing-a-social-cohesion-index-for-the-arab-region.html

sion in an era of increasing access to mobile technologies, changing patterns of community communication, and mobilization. This creates new opportunities to link assessment approaches to efforts to strengthen cohesion.

Clearly articulate the purpose of an assessment early in the process design. SCORE's work in Liberia had a clear objective from the start: to identify areas in which social cohesion could be strengthened by fostering trust and facilitating economic exchange and interdependence. The project directly addressed the subjective aspects of cohesion, such as symbols of a shared and inclusive national identity. The SCORE analysis thus contributed directly to the Liberian peacebuilding plan.

In Kyrgyzstan, social cohesion analysis was used to inform community-driven development approaches. By focusing on a time or place that was socially cohesive - for example, by recalling a period when people lived together harmoniously, before today's differences divided them - UNDP could strengthen social cohesion with well-designed programmes and projects.





အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

Women Groups

၂၀၁၈

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

CBO

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

Muslim Youth

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ

အထွေထွေအခြေအနေ



4

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL COHESION, CONFLICT DYNAMICS AND PEACEBUILDING



Before exploring the concept of social cohesion further, this section examines some of the factors leading to intolerance and conflict. They can be a prelude to the escalation of deadly violence, particularly in the absence of an inclusive, capable state. Exclusive and conflictual constructions of identity contribute to such intolerance and enmity. In turn, inclusivity, integrated civil society and associational life, economic interdependency, and networks for conflict and crisis prevention link social cohesion to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Social cohesion is influenced by structural factors, such as unequal stratification in society and power acquisition. Relationships within society become more strained when conflicts are not managed adequately through informal and formal dialogues, policy-making, and public policies to address inequity.²⁰ When challenges and crises occur and violence looms or escalates, collective fears can crystallize rapidly along identity lines and undermine social cohesion. In the worst contexts, economic, social and cultural ties across groups are strained or nearly severed when conflicts form along those lines.

When differences in society become unmanageable and create a situation where co-existence and a fair distribution of power and resources is perceived as impossible, violence against others is regarded as a legitimate and necessary means to ensure survival of the own group. Thus, eroded social cohesion can lead to violent inter-group conflict and a tense state-society relationship, while the conflict further undermines cohesion. These relationships are mutually reinforcing.

Analysis of situations in which social cohesion is absent or erodes has yielded several main conceptual and functional approaches to understanding how relatively peaceful societies can degenerate into identity-based violence. One perspective emphasizes the importance of ‘ethnic entrepreneurs,’ or political elites who may mobilize around divisive identity themes for political power. In some cases, these political elites monopolize state power. This perspective is particularly strong in the analysis of electoral politics, where mobilization to protect identity is sometimes laced with fear, scapegoating of other communities and appeals to ethnic, religious or racial solidarity. Scholars who study civil war, for example, have examined the effects of ethnic mobilization in electoral processes as a precursor to social violence, as political leaders fan the flames of social discord and create the conditions for conflictual interactions.²¹

Similarly, political leaders may use ethnic networks of patronage and distribution of economic resources to empower their own group at the expense of others. Social discrimination and economic inequalities undermine social cohesion. Deep socioeconomic divisions among ethnic groups and group-level inequalities may constrain political elites’ abilities to govern inclusively. This, in turn, exacerbates conflict dynamics.

Globalization and technological progress fostered extraordinary economic growth and created conditions for unparalleled reduction of extreme poverty and generalized improvement of living standards. But their unbalanced nature led to high income concentration and extreme inequality and made exclusion even more intolerable. Exclusion, competition over dwindling resources and shortcomings in governance undermine social cohesion and institutional robustness, further contributing to eruption of violent conflicts.

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary General

Migration, both internal and cross-border, is often an important dimension of social cohesion. Countries experiencing migration crises may experience the rise of extremist tendencies, political violence and eroding social cohesion.²² UNDP takes a developmental and rights-based approach to migration. Managing its social effects requires dialogue among stakeholders to create a comprehensive and coherent national policy and institutional framework, sub-national and local initiatives for positive development, and solutions in times of conflict, crisis or disaster.²³

20 For a recent comprehensive overview of conflict causes, patterns of escalation, and management and prevention of conflict, see: United Nations, World Bank (2017). and United Nations World Bank, 2017. *Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>.

21 Cederman, Lars, Wimmer, Andreas, and Min, Brian “Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel?” *World Politics*, 62:1 (2010): 87-119.

22 See International IDEA, 2017. “Migration, Social Polarization, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism,” in *The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy’s Resilience*, Stockholm: International IDEA, available at <https://idea.int/gsod/>.

23 UNDP (2015b). *Guidance Note: A Development Approach to Migration and Displacement*. New York: UNDP, 2015. Available at: <http://undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/conflict-prevention/strengthening-resilience-to-conflict-and-turbulence.html>.



While the drivers and dynamics of social polarization are unique in each context, several common factors appear to drive it and deepen conflict within society.

Narratives of belonging, exclusion and negative stereotypes. While national identity is increasingly defined in civic or inclusive citizenship terms in today's mostly multi-ethnic societies, nationalism can also be constructed in more exclusive, ethnic, racial or religious terms. How does the collective historical narrative affect social cohesion? Narratives establish the underlying notion of the degree of exclusion and inclusion in a society.

Political marginalization and exclusion. Perceptions of second-class status in one's own country, the systematic or continuing exclusion of marginalization, and lack of political influence are strong drivers of grievance. When political systems deliberately or inadvertently marginalize and exclude major segments of the population from political representation and influence, this sets the stage for frustration, withdrawal and non-cooperation, and, potentially, efforts by communities to withdraw from the state. As the 2018 World Bank and United Nations *Pathways to Peace* report contends, "Exclusionary systems that are perceived to privilege some groups at the expense of others create fertile ground for violence."²⁴

Perceived threats. *Collective group fears* constitute an underlying driver of violence. A threat to peace creates a sense of fear and imminent harm, which in turn reinforces vulnerability to violence. In many contexts, as we have often heard, risks of conflict escalation arise from "fears of the future, lived through the past."²⁵

Horizontal inequalities and patterned discrimination. Patterned discrimination and the systematic exclusion of social groups fuel perceptions of mistrust, systemic persecution and social humiliation. Patterns of accumulated social exclusion are often found in political and economic networks and patterns of patronage and may be seen in the distribution of public resources by the state. Political, social and economic relations strongly effect policies on sensitive issues such as lan-

guage, religious freedom, education, healthcare, food production, land, access to jobs, the environment and pollution, as well as on choosing whom and what to honour when naming public spaces and erecting monuments and memorials. These policies must be inclusive to avoid polarization.

Public policies. Policies that address spatial settlement, housing, access to water and transportation infrastructure, and unequal access to public services correlate strongly to identity-conflict dynamics. Public policies at the local level to ensure inclusivity and fairness in housing, transportation, access to health, and employment can determine whether an urban area is more peaceful or experiences high rates of violence and conflict.²⁶ Separating conflicting groups is one way to reduce any propensity to violence. However, reinforcing long-standing divisions can lead myths about the other to emerge and can prevent opportunities to engage across the conflict divide. This, in turn, can facilitate efforts to mobilize violence against unfamiliar and, often, de-humanized 'others.' Research on social cohesion and urban violence in Brazil and South Africa shows that spatial inequality, high urban crime rates and a lack of social bonds are strong contributors to violence.²⁷

Social deprivation and injustice. When inequality is based on identity, this creates a risk of discrimination, which leads to inequitable access to jobs and livelihoods. In addition, it can restrict certain groups' participation in governance processes and structures, including lack of adequate representation in police and military forces and unequal access to land, capital, water and natural resources. Disadvantaged minority groups also experience unequal access to education, health care, housing and sanitation. Moreover, women and girls in horizontally-disadvantaged groups experience dual discrimination, as they also tend to suffer higher rates of gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence.

Violent conflict - national or local political violence along identity lines - reinforces widespread fears. It divides informal social organizations and civil society, including political parties and factions, along identity

24 *Pathways to Peace* (op. cit. note 1), p. 96.

25 Paige Arthur, "Fear of the Future, Lived through the Past: Transitional Justice in the Wake of Ethnic Conflict", ICTJ Research Brief, October 2009, <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Identities-EthnicConflict-ResearchBrief-2009-English.pdf>.

26 See, Bollens, Scott "Managing Multicultural Cities in Divided Countries," in K. Good, L. Turgeon, T. Triadafilopoulos (Eds.), *Segmented Cities?: How Urban Contexts Shape Ethnic and Nationalist Politics*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. University of British Columbia, 2014: 226-249.

27 The research is described at the Safe and Inclusive Cities project website, at <https://idrc.ca/en/safe-and-inclusive-cities>.





© UNDP Mauritania

lines. Pervasive fear drives inter-group differentiation and intra-group bonding. In some cases, this leads groups to seek greater physical separation or to join parallel institutions where individuals, families and communities find safety. Left unaddressed, fear serves

as a foundation for conflict recurrence. Deadly violence is both the cause of an absence of cohesion and the principal threat to it: when violence erupts, common social norms, values, and ties are destroyed.

4.2

PEACEBUILDING PERSPECTIVE: THEORIES OF CHANGE

The concept of social cohesion offers insights into mechanisms of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It identifies both objective and subjective factors that underlie social dynamics and links them to mechanisms for communication and joint action to prevent escalation. Trust is a critical factor in the non-violent management of conflict. The denser the degree of social cohesion, the greater the likelihood that national, regional, or local networks of actors exist that can work to prevent conflicts from escalating. These include women's groups, religious leaders or civil society organizations, particularly those working with excluded groups.

In diverse, multiethnic contexts, cooperation, amity and economic exchange across identity lines is common and civil society organizations often cut across lines of

identity. Social cohesion is a product of networks and connections based on trust and interaction that can address or ameliorate root causes or prevent escalation. Such conceptualization informs a framework of analysis for social cohesion that can help to improve conflict vulnerability assessment frameworks.

Identifying drivers of social cohesion also relates to theories of change. How can a society strengthen social cohesion, build greater trust, enhance interdependency and reinforce networks for conflict management? In turn, laying out a theory of change also leads to prioritizing entry points, thinking creatively about programmes and addressing common problems of sustainability also seen in peacebuilding programmes more generally.



4.3

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION

Theories of change in social cohesion programming are linked to the peacebuilding perspective.²⁸ Holistic approaches to change in social relationships, networks and institutions require a local and participatory approach that includes locally-led, long-term, and both bottom-up and top-down perspectives. Acknowledging that because contexts differ, no single theory of change exists for strengthening social cohesion, the peacebuilding perspective offers important insights into practice. The social pyramid offers a useful metaphor, without suggesting that relationships are solely hierarchical or top-down. The peacebuilding perspective recognizes the mutual interactions that occur across the levels of the pyramid. Social cohesion is related to the three levels in the following ways.

Social cohesion programming and projects focused on the highest level tend to address developing collaborative leadership skills and creating institutions for interaction, dialogue and problem-solving. In this work, the theory of change is simple and well-understood: **leadership matters in setting the social tone on key issues of cohesion**, such as tolerance, inclusivity, belongingness and the creation of symbols, rituals, and gestures that reflect social solidarity. Indeed, much of the research focused on the production of social cohesion explores such symbolic interaction and the ways in which an inclusive society is communicated through leadership interactions. Key legal frameworks, institutions, and national-level policy on education, health, or the media are also critical factors at this level.

Social cohesion programming at middle levels assumes that civil society and associational life are essential to social cohesion. **Values, norms and behaviours associated with cohesion are found throughout key institutions, such as the media, civil society organizations and academic institutions that bridge or create links across divisions within society.**

Theories of change at the interpersonal level are typically based on contact theory, or the notion that getting to know the ‘other’ can reduce bias and improve understanding. While debate continues about contact theory as a blanket approach to building interpersonal trust, **there is a basic understanding that knowledge of other cultures, perspectives, and practices is a critical social skill and leads to empathy and understanding others.** Often, interaction across groups requires neutral, public spaces or other opportunities for healthy contact and interaction across lines of difference. Grassroots efforts may focus directly on the everyday aspects of social cohesion. Strengthening interpersonal trust creates the conditions for trust and interactions at other social levels. Individuals often demonstrate trust, refute stereotypes and create the practical, everyday conditions for living together. This is seen in the workplace, schools and the public sphere, with individual attitudes also shaped by media and mass communications.



TABLE 2

PEACEBUILDING THREE LEVELS INTERACTION: LEADERSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND INDIVIDUAL LEVELS AND APPROACHES

TYPES OF ACTORS

APPROACHES TO BUILDING PEACE

LEVEL 1	<p>Top Leadership Military/political/religious leaders with high visibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Focus on high-level negotiations ↳ Emphasizes cease-fire ↳ Led by highly visible, single mediator
LEVEL 2	<p>Middle-Range Leadership Leaders respected in sectors Ethnic/religious leaders Academics/intellectuals Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Problem-solving workshops ↳ Training in conflict resolution ↳ Peace commissions ↳ Insider-partial teams
LEVEL 3	<p>Grassroots Leadership Local leaders Leaders of indigenous NGOs Community developers Local health officials Refugee camp leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↳ Local peace commissions ↳ Grassroots training ↳ Prejudice reduction ↳ Psychosocial work in postwar trauma

Affected Population

Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of PEace Press, 1997), 39.







5

SOCIAL COHESION IN PRACTICE: EXPERIENCE AND EXAMPLES FROM UNDP

UNDP's core practice areas include strengthening social cohesion; for example, improving economic recovery and livelihoods, advancing equality and inclusion in governance, and building national capacities for conflict prevention. Enhancing, deepening and fostering social cohesion is an objective of interventions with local communities or with the state to develop non-violent methods to address disputes and conflict. Support for inclusive governance in both informal and formal processes is an overall approach to sustaining peace in conflict-affected countries (UNDP 2012).

This section provides concluding guidance based on the experience of UNDP practitioners, including practical and ethical reflections regarding efforts to strengthen social cohesion.

In practice, UNDP employs direct approaches that articulate social cohesion as a primary outcome of activities, such as supporting dialogue initiatives that directly engage identity-based actors. It also takes indirect ap-

proaches, where social cohesion is a secondary or complementary outcome to other goals, but helps mitigate drivers of conflict and instability.

The social cohesion concept has emerged within the broader evolving knowledge base and practice of peacebuilding as a leading concept to assess social dynamics. It is also a common strategic goal of interventions to promote resilience to conflict and achieve recovery.



Direct and indirect approaches are complementary in strengthening social cohesion. Direct social cohesion programming may include dialogue projects, support to institutions for conflict prevention or capacity-development projects to enable the work of local civil society networks of local peacebuilders. Articulating social cohesion as a direct outcome of the engagement is a hallmark of these programmes. Governance and human rights projects strengthen mechanisms that manage diversity, provide early warning and work to combat mistreatment of groups.

Development programmes and projects addressing, for example, health care, education, livelihoods, food security or gender empowerment may have a significant impact on enhancing social cohesion. Indirect programming involves efforts to use the full scope of development-oriented work to build community ties and economic or governance interdependencies.

5.1.1 SUPPORTING AN INCLUSIVE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In many contexts, the narrative of, ‘Who are we as a nation?’ is an important aspect of defining social cohesion. However, understandings of that narrative are invariably contested. Fears for the future are often influenced by understandings of the past and the would-be winners and losers of a conflict. Narratives represent a collection of symbols, stories and well-worn events that define and shape a society and its values, traumas and aspirations. They are often enshrined in traditions, rituals, holidays or memorials.

For example, in **Guyana**, UNDP pioneered a social cohesion programme to address the country’s politicized racial divisions, which had become increasingly polarized during the economic decline of the late 1990s and

early 2000s. Governance had become winner-take-all, the leadership could no longer unite the nation, the political culture was infused with racial perceptions, and attitudes and mistrust were rife. UNDP worked to develop a shared understanding of the problem, created local ownership of constructive and peaceful change, and facilitated a conflict transformation process. This featured a range of activities, including creating safe spaces for dialogue, developing capacity in conflict transformation for senior political party and youth leaders, and supporting the government’s Ethnic Relations Commission. The specific outcomes included a plan to prevent election-related violence during the country’s very tense 2006 elections.²⁹

Recent efforts to build social cohesion reflect the importance of inclusivity and mutual understanding in historical narratives. Inclusivity means recognizing and embracing diversity. Mutual understanding means identifying and building upon those values and symbols that have a shared or unifying value.³⁰

In Nepal, social cohesion efforts have emphasized the grandeur of the Himalaya Mountains and the storied nature of the world’s highest peak. In South Africa, the inclusive nature of the nation, as embodied by former president and Nobel Peace Laureate Nelson Mandela, offers a common point of reference. Kosovo’s³¹ first Olympic Gold Medal, which it won at the 2016 Rio Olympics (awarded to Majlinda Kelmendi in the 52-kg women’s judo competition) advanced national identity in a country whose sovereignty is disputed. As developing African nations, Nigeria and Senegal achieved successes at the 2018 FIFA World Cup with strong performances that were celebrated internationally. Those successes contributed to a sense of national pride that transcended internal differences within these countries, sparking a broader debate about national identity in Africa.³²

29 See the case study on the UNDP Guyana programme at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/sib/egm/paper/Chris%20Spies.pdf>.

30 UNDESA, 2009, “Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration,” at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2009/Ghana/inclusive-society.pdf>

31 Kosovo - Hereafter referred to in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

32 Foda, Karim and Mariama Sow, “Africa in the World Cup: Building Cohesion through the World’s Most-watched Sport,” Brookings Institution Africa in Focus, 13 June, 2018, at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/06/13/africa-in-the-world-cup-building-cohesion-through-the-worlds-most-watched-sport/>.



5.1.2 DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION PROCESSES TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COHESION

UNDP has a long track record of supporting a variety of dialogue initiatives. Examples range from national-level dialogue projects (as in Guatemala or Lebanon), to regional and local programmes, where inter-group violence has been especially acute (as in Kosovo, Sudan and Indonesia), and interfaith dialogues that bring together religious leaders in a collective call for peace and social development. Dialogue projects seek to mend strained inter-group relationships and change antagonistic perceptions of and attitudes toward the ‘other,’ with direct dialogue across lines of division. In general, dialogue between groups and between state-level and civil society actors have been part of strengthening cohesion, even leading to agreements to cease direct hostilities and address local conflicts.

However, in those contexts where dialogue has not been linked to real institutional changes that allow for inclusive political processes or to tangible economic change and improvement in livelihoods, it may be difficult for dialogue to be effective. Effectiveness varies along the conflict trajectory. In cases where the state has not addressed social grievances, dialogue can also be a risk. Governments may use these models to pacify and demobilize opposition groups without pursuing substantive institutional or social change.³³

Overall, without local ownership, long-term inter-group dialogue projects are very difficult to sustain at the level of intensity and coverage necessary to foster social cohesion.

UNDP has worked closely with the European Union (EU) since 2012 to support the **development, strengthening and application of ‘insider mediation’ capacities worldwide**.³⁴ The partnership with the EU has focused on strengthening the capacities of national and local actors to help establish sustainable national mechanisms, forums and/or capacities for internal mediation and conflict management. In many other countries, development partners have provided similar assistance to insider mediators to sustain both peace and development and, sometimes, to complement formal peace processes.

Collaborative capacity at the local level is reflected in levels of social cohesion and communities’ ability to live and work together in shared spaces. Without such capacity, the consensus and coalitions underlying the meaningful change and critical reforms necessary to achieve the SDGs cannot be achieved and peace cannot be sustained. This capacity is reflected, in part, in the institutions, both formal and traditional, that mediate consensus and peaceful change, whether parliamentary committees, local peace councils, national reconciliation commissions or forums of elders.

Equally importantly, capacity is reflected in the roles and work of trusted intermediaries — insider mediators — whose influence, legitimacy, courage and unique skills can trigger the changes in attitudes and behaviours required for meaningful transformation, often mediating differences before tensions erupt into violence.

33 For further analysis on national dialogue processes, see Paffenholz, Thania, Ann Zachariassen, and Cindy Helfer. 2017. *What Makes or Breaks National Dialogues*, Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative, October 2017, available at <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/report-what-makes-or-breaks-national-dialogues>.

34 Insider mediators are informal or formal mechanisms of managing relationships across communities, preventing violent conflict and building trust. Institutions such as parliaments, elections, public hearings, etc. are examples such mechanisms at the national and community level. UNDP, 2015a. *Supporting Insider Mediation: Strengthening Resilience to Conflict and Turbulence*, New York: UNDP. Available at: <http://undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/conflict-prevention/strengthening-resilience-to-conflict-and-turbulence.html>



CASE STUDY

INTERNAL MEDIATORS HELPING TO BUILD SOCIAL COHESION IN YEMEN



The ongoing conflict in Yemen has caused large-scale damage, spurred a humanitarian crisis and exacerbated existing social tensions. Following the promise of the 2011 revolution and the failure of the political transition, Yemen's conflict is straining local social cohesion, entrenching divisions that follow pre-existing rifts, creating new ones (e.g., between Sunni and Shi'a, host and refugee communities), and eroding common interests that could unite the country. This is the context in which internal mediators (IMs) were engaged as agents of peace in the Taiz and Abayan regions, seeking to bring people together to discuss issues affecting them, reach collaborative solutions to resolve conflicts and improve lives.

The IMs were selected in two phases. First, they were identified by the EU and UN joint project implementation team and trained as master trainers. In the second phase, a consultative workshop was held to identify additional IMs, based on the selection criteria (belonging to the same target district, possessing previous experience in community mediation, enjoying community acceptance and willing to engage in community meetings and mediation sessions). Representatives from community development committees (CDCs), local authorities and CSOs evaluated the nominations and approved the final list. The IMs received trainings to build their capacities in conflict scans, conflict resolution, mediation, effective communication, and dialogue design and facilitation. To help them absorb and practice their new skills, the trainings were divided into modules and conducted over time. The IMs were also mentored and supported throughout their engagements. This involved mobilizing senior trainers who were trained at the start of the programme to support and mentor the IMs as required. A network of 120 IMs was created, involving four targeted districts.

The IMs engaged their communities in activities including conflict scans, dialogue processes and community initiatives. Conflict scans focused on local-level conflicts, conflict drivers,

conflict parties and resources for peace. The results were validated/prioritized in inclusive community meetings with the main stakeholders. IMs then helped to identify entry points and developed proposals to lead dialogue processes around these conflicts. Each process was designed to provide opportunities to discuss and explore best available options to resolve the conflict. Simultaneously, IMs worked to restore community relations and trust. Where funding was required to fully resolve the conflict, community contributions were emphasized to ensure ownership. IMs supervised the implementation of initiatives to ensure the agreement was respected.

The protracted crisis has rendered basic institutions inoperative and created a trust deficit between the country's institutions and its affected communities. Thanks to the IM facilitation of community dialogue, a self-referral forum was established to resolve conflicts around access to basic services such as water, sanitation, education and health facilities, and community infrastructure.

Mediation is not alien to the Yemeni community. However, it is frequently conducted by traditional sheikhs and leading community figures. Internal mediation empowers other community stakeholders, particularly women, to participate in the process, help to promote peace and enhance social cohesion. In Yemen's current context, IMs have contributed significantly to restoring stability to communities experiencing conflicts. They have helped Yemenis bridge the gap that existed previously between local authorities and local communities. Local communities have begun to engage effectively in the non-violent resolution of conflict drivers. IMs have also restored relations among community members by enabling them to listen to differing viewpoints, reach agreements, take action collectively, and contribute personal time and funds. This has enhanced local resilience to violence and increased social cohesion through cooperation.

Source: UNDP and SFCG Yemen



CASE STUDY**DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION IN LATIN AMERICA**

In recent decades, UNDP has become a leading actor supporting democratic dialogue in Latin America, connecting citizens with those in power.

The Regional Project on Democratic Dialogue (RPDD) was established in 2001. Today, it provides training and support throughout the region. The programme supports conflict resolution, promotes specific development issues that are high on the public agenda, such as legal reform and intercultural development, ensures respect for human rights, and prevents recurrence of violent conflict.

The RDDP has been working to create mechanisms that support and promote the creation of infrastructure for peace:

- tools to analyse conflict, development needs, policies and prospective scenarios to assess the feasibility of dialogue processes;
- early warning systems and platforms to monitor claims that could generate conflicts; and,

- design and implementation of intervention protocols and agreements for handling conflicts.

In addition, in contexts such as Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica and Peru, UNDP has provided conflict analysis tools, training courses on dialogue and mediation, and computer software to monitor and track social unrest. The programme has established a close partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS).

Ongoing technical assistance has been provided for strategic interventions to prevent and resolve conflict, using lessons from more than 30 missions in the region to conduct analysis, provide technical support and assist with conflict management.

For more information see the RPDD website: <http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/>

5.1.3 SUPPORTING NETWORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE

Practitioners have found that two important factors contribute significantly to social cohesion in the realm of peacebuilding. One involves networks of insider mediators that can monitor, respond to crises and work at individual, community and national levels to prevent conflicts from escalating. Such networks often also require a second ingredient: space and opportunity to interact. Social cohesion programming benefits from a clear analysis that identifies such networks and spaces.

Peace architectures, especially local peace committees, have at times worked effectively to generate horizontal social cohesion and reduce conflict vulnerability.³⁵ In many contexts, informal institutions, such as these committees, have provided an alternative framework to mediate local disputes, respond to crises and harness a range of local capacities through peacebuilding networks.

A principal advantage of such approaches is their ability to leverage local knowledge to address conflict. Such knowledge allows for in-depth mapping of resources and issues and can bridge the divide through networks that operate from the national and regional to local contexts.

35 For a comparative analysis of peace committees, see Andries Odendaal, *Local Committees and National Peacebuilding*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2013.



CASE STUDY

INSIDER MEDIATORS AND INFRASTRUCTURES FOR PEACE IN ZIMBABWE



Zimbabwe's peace architecture is multi-layered and multi-stakeholder. The country has taken an important and bold step towards sustaining peace by addressing the long-term societal impacts and legacies of lengthy conflict, as well as by laying a foundation for prevention as a pillar of development.

With the January 2018 signing of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Act, the country established the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). Its overall goals are to:

- lay the foundation for sustainable peace and stability;
- support the country in addressing its past by initiating inclusive healing and reconciliation processes; and,
- enhance national and sub-national capacities for the peaceful prevention of future conflicts as pathways to sustain peace and deepen social cohesion.

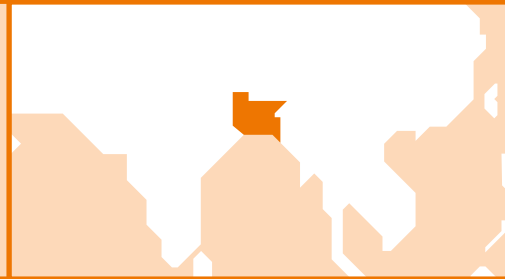
To achieve them, the NPRC conducted provincial-level consultations from 16 February - 2 March 2018, with support from the government and complementary financial and technical assistance from the UN. The goal was to promote a bottom-up approach to obtaining citizen input on the key sources of conflict and causes undermining peacebuilding efforts, while also identifying existing capacities for peace and reconciliation. Stakeholders also identified residual and unresolved conflict periods in the country's history that require sustained engagement through inclusive healing and reconciliation.

On 9 May 2018, a national peace and reconciliation conference validated the outcomes of these consultations. This has created space for sustained and strategic conversations and dialogue on sensitive peacebuilding needs in Zimbabwe, most of which will form the basis of the country's long-term peacebuilding and reconciliation strategy. The Chapter 12 Platform, which brings together the five independent commissions mandated to promote peace, protect rights and support democracy in the country, complements these efforts. It is a critical safe space within which to promote dialogue with citizens on constitutional values. Efforts are now underway to establish a leadership platform for multi-party youth wings. The terms of reference will be endorsed by the main wings as a prevention architecture during the elections. This is linked to a possible peace pledge by the presidential candidates, who are to be convened by the NPRC shortly after the nominations are complete.

With UN support and in collaboration with faith-based organizations, more than 292 local peace committees have been established in areas across the country affected historically by conflicts. These structures continue to play a critical role in diffusing tensions within communities, serving as early warning mechanisms and linking local peacebuilding needs to the national level. Religious leaders within the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations continue to play a central role as intermediaries, supporting insider mediation efforts and providing high-level informal advocacy and consensus-building.

CASE STUDY

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION IN A SUB-NATIONAL CONTEXT IN BANGLADESH



UNDP established a conflict prevention programme in southeast Bangladesh to support the 1997 Peace Accord in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It offers examples of good practices in the use of conflict analysis and steps to improve conflict sensitivity and social cohesion.

An autonomy-inspired insurgency began in 1973, leading to intense conflict and, subsequently, worsening living conditions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Entire areas became inaccessible due to insecurity and a lack of law and order. Improper land management and problems in the areas of local administration, education and health followed.

After a peace accord was signed in 1997, UNDP was asked to support its implementation. In 2003, the agency created the Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts programme. It operated at the local and sub-regional levels, working with communities and emerging local governments to improve livelihoods, dialogue and representation in local decision-making. It also supported policy advocacy, including on the sensitive issue of land management.

The emergence of local governments and services, through local development projects, supported implementation of the peace agreement. In addition, 3,500 Para Development Communities have been established in remote areas, covering approximately 40% of the communities. They have provided an important link to government institutions and bolster demands for services and improved governance. One hundred and forty-nine people, the majority of whom are women, have undertaken confidence-building activities to promote the role of women in local government. Local professionals have been trained to take up teaching or nursing, positions previously held by non-indigenous people, including 1,000 women who are now healthcare workers.

One of the lessons that UNDP learned is the importance of working with the highest levels of government, the military and police, as well as with local areas and communities. For example, the UNDP Resident Representative working on policing and law and order issues, which had caused considerable friction previously, held a dialogue with high-level police officers. This led to the latter's support for UNDP's engagement with sub-national and local-level police.

One research project on social cohesion concludes that:

Local initiatives are having positive impacts at the community level and beyond. Local efforts are shown to strategically and successfully influence state structures, from improving service delivery to countering radicalized political narratives. The challenges throughout the case studies demonstrate how vulnerable stability can be when the presence of the state is limited, when society loses trust in those governing, and when peace is not locally owned.³⁶

However, there are risks associated with establishing institutions for peacebuilding and conflict prevention, including the misappropriation of those institutions' resources for personal profit. In Nigeria, Kenya and Nepal, for example, local peace committees were on occasion subject to political capture by local governing elites or individuals engaged in peacebuilding and prevention work primarily for rent-seeking purposes.

Sociologically, religion is a common marker of collective identity. It can be a tool for political mobilization and

36

Ó Súilleabháin, Andrea, "Leveraging Local Knowledge for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Africa," New York: International Peace Institute, 2015.



provide the basis for determining who belongs in a society and who does not. Advancing tolerance and freedom of religion and belief and building bridges within and across religious traditions are important aspects of social cohesion programming. In countries such as Bosnia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Sri Lanka, religious leaders, institutions and organizations have been involved in interfaith efforts. The focus is to promote common understandings, build linkages and act in concert to prevent polarization and respond to crises. Religious leaders, churches and religious-based organizations bring unique dimensions to conflict settings. They may invoke global narratives and transcendent concepts in the peacebuilding context, all of which can be related to social cohesion and peace.

5.1.4 WOMEN AND YOUTH FOR SOCIAL COHESION

Many UNDP Country Offices working on social cohesion give special attention to women and youth. This acknowledges that those groups need to be actively included in many UNDP contexts, as their inclusion benefits the initiatives. One UNDP staff member commented, “From experience, we have seen that if women are involved in social cohesion initiatives at community level, the initiatives are more likely to be successful.”

Some innovative examples include:

NEPAL: women- and youth-led dialogue forums were established alongside the multi-stakeholder dialogue process. Together with a designated budget, this enabled these groups to work on issues of particular concern. UNDP took an additional step and commissioned a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy, which reviews UN and Government of Nepal policies, identifies international best practices, defines priority areas and proposed actions, and proposes institutional modalities for gender equality.

JORDAN: as part of its social cohesion programme and based on the conflict analysis, the Jordan Country Office focuses on women’s religious networks. These structures are not immediately visible, but they exist within every mosque and Islamic organization and are highly influential, at both the community level and within the family.

GHANA: UNDP conducted a baseline study in April 2014, *Baseline Report on the Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention, Particularly the Level of Participation of Women and the Youth*, in development programmes. The report assesses the level of participation of women and youth and presents opportunities for increased engagement.

CASE STUDY

SUPPORTING WOMEN’S NETWORKS FOR PEACE

Supporting women’s networks for peace is an integral part of several social cohesion programmes. Research on women and peacebuilding has highlighted both limits and opportunities when focusing on women as key actors in bridge building within ethnically fractured societies. The following are essential in this process:

- Explore the incentives, methods and opportunities for women to unite and how they organize for peace.
- Consider the existing institutions and processes through which women can interact, at various levels, both local and national. For instance, UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans might be an entry point for exploring

women’s participation in various processes.

- Understand the actual underlying family and community relationships that affect women to understand the conditions and mechanisms through which they can contribute to peace most effectively; that is, how UNDP can support efforts for inclusion of women in the most effective fashion. This may be the most critical point.

For further resources and an overview of approaches and tools, see ‘Women, Gender and Peacebuilding Processes’, of the Peacebuilding Initiative at <http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/index9aa5.html?pagelid=1959>.



MYANMAR: to support the active participation of women and youth, UNDP developed a pilot project with young men and women (65% women) to enable them to become technology entrepreneurs and market simple technologies, such as cooking stoves and solar lights, in rural communities. It empowered the youth as part of their active engagement in society.

5.1.5 COUNTERING HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES

In situations where historical inequalities exist among groups, any project that might challenge those realities is highly political. Holistic approaches to transforming governance and economic structures contribute to decreasing the risk of potential identity-based conflicts. Perceived social injustices, economic inequality, religious and political repression, poverty, and social exclusion interact to create conditions highly conducive to recurrent social violence. Interventions that address structural drivers of conflict must work together with those that address psychological, identity-based drivers.

Low levels of horizontal inequality – defined as deep-seated economic, social, political and cultural discrimination – appear to be necessary in order to achieve long-term social cohesion and a shared vision of society. When such forms of discrimination are practiced along group lines, cohesion will exist on the surface, at best, and long-term stability with a common or shared vision is elusive.³⁷

The Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in South Africa (CSV), which works on horizontal inequalities, livelihood and social cohesion, offers a useful case study. In exploring the effects of a poverty-reducing Community Works Programme (CWP) in South Africa, CSV found that some of the communities (or townships) with programmes experienced lower levels of violence overall and fewer xenophobic attacks. The research revealed linkages between the overall social protection programme designed to secure basic income and the social cohesion components which, together, prevented violence. However, in some cases, the work programme hindered cohesion. The Center found that “the impact of the CWP is not always positive.... [I]n some of the six communities, the CWP was a source of racial or inter-

personal conflicts, power struggles amongst the local elites for the control of the CWP, xenophobic or ethnic divisions”³⁸ Thus, indirect social cohesion programming requires extensive, in-depth assessment and equally careful programme and project design if it is to advance, rather than hinder, conflict prevention capacities at the local level. In-depth analysis related to social cohesion must be incorporated in a project or programme if initiatives are to reduce horizontal inequalities.

5.1.6 ECONOMIC RECOVERY, LIVELIHOODS AND SOCIAL COHESION

Livelihood and economic recovery interventions in conflict and disaster settings can contribute to broader social cohesion and peacebuilding goals. Offering targeted economic opportunities, rehabilitation of socioeconomic infrastructure and income rapidly to conflict-affected populations can ease tensions, reduce specific vulnerabilities and address long-standing grievances among community groups.

To ensure effectiveness and sustainability, it is important to **adopt a participatory approach and a social cohesion perspective in a livelihoods and economic recovery programme**. The opinions and grievances of all groups of a community (including ethnic, political orientation, gender, age or displacement status) must be considered in designing interventions, which should not exacerbate tensions. If community members perceive that economic recovery interventions favor a certain conflict party or a specific group, those interventions are more likely to fail. Livelihoods and economic recovery strategies can contribute to economic empowerment and social cohesion objectives simultaneously. For example, creating self-managed savings groups (ROSCAs, rotating savings and credit associations), such as village loan and savings associations and MUSOs (*Mutuelles de Solidarité*), will do more than improve access to finance, livelihoods and participants’ resilience. These groups will also play an important role in building or reinforcing cohesion among members as part of horizontal social cohesion. This is done through training or awareness-raising sessions on life skills and other issues relevant to the community. Social cohesion elements can be integrated into livelihoods programmes in multiple ways and a combination

37 Stewart, Frances, “The Dynamics of Horizontal Inequalities,” UNDP Human Development Report Think Piece, 2016, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/stewart_layout.pdf.

38 Langa, Malose, Themba Masuku, David Bruce, and Hugo van der Merwe. 2016. “Facilitating or Hindering Social Cohesion? The Impact of the Community Work Programme in Selected South African Townships,” *South African Crime Quarterly*, No. 55 (2016), p. 41, <http://journals.assaf.org.za/index.php/sacq/article/view/159>.





© UNDP Guatemala

of elements is often used. For instance, **integrated, multidimensional programmes** take a geographic approach. Social cohesion and livelihood objectives are then pursued in parallel, together with components such as local governance and rule of law. Programmes conducted in parallel in a specific geographical area include complementary components that contribute to a broader goal; for example, stabilization, peacebuilding or resilience to violence. UNDP Country Offices in Nigeria, Iraq and Mali have used this approach.

Another approach involves the use of livelihoods and economic recovery strategies that **embed social cohesion within the programme**. UNDP livelihoods and early recovery programming often uses the '3x6' approach, which is based on three phases -inclusion, ownership and sustainability – each of which features two steps.³⁹ For example, programmes for community reintegration of displaced persons, ex-combatants or survivors of gender-based violence often include social cohesion elements. Social cohesion may also be seen as a precondition

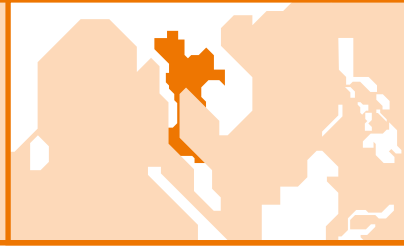
for effective long-term implementation of the economic recovery and livelihoods components. The 3x6 approach emphasizes community participation and planning, where all members of a community participate in setting the programme priorities. The process is also intended to contribute to social cohesion and conflict prevention.

In environments prone to community tensions, **conflict analysis and community dialogue is central to designing livelihoods and economic recovery interventions**. It is important to understand the conflict dynamics, causes and drivers, power dynamics and relationships among stakeholders in order to frame the best possible intervention. A participatory community dialogue can also be held to ensure that the main community groups and conflict stakeholders take part in a joint decision-making process.

39 For more information on «3x6», see <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/global-toolkit-on-the-3x6-approach--building-resilience-through-.html>

CASE STUDY

EMPOWERMENT, PARTICIPATION AND COHESION IN SOUTHERN THAILAND



UNDP has been supporting peace, justice and social cohesion in the troubled Deep South region of Thailand. The country's three southern, predominantly Muslim provinces have been plagued by conflict. A separatist insurgency, originating in 1948, flared up in 2004 and a state of emergency was declared. More than 6,500 people died and nearly 12,000 were injured between 2004 and 2015.

In 2010, UNDP launched the Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation Project (STEP), which is still underway. It seeks to build community and local government capacity in dialogues for peace, access to justice and livelihoods for social cohesion.

The project works locally to support community-based livelihood initiatives to address the greatest needs and build cooperation within the conflict-affected communities and with local government. The programme supports the peace process overall through local peace networks, the media and improving access to justice and supports community development and social cohesion.

The project's second phase was initiated in 2014. It addresses social cohesion by developing the skills of vulnerable and conflict-affected communities to plan, establish and manage development initiatives that contribute to human security and social cohesion.

A long list of potential community-based projects was established based on an external assessment. Those communities received training in project development and proposal writing before submitting their proposals to a review committee established by the project management and whose members included civil society partners. Twelve projects from the list received funding, from direct support to micro-grants.

While a few villages are primarily Muslim, most recipient villages are mixed Buddhist-Muslim. All communities that received grants have been directly affected by the conflict, which often strains relationships between Buddhists and Muslims. The community projects provide an avenue for social cohesion, as well as livelihood opportunities for conflict-affected women, youth and the communities more broadly.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for example, the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), jointly developed by the MONUSCO and UN Country Team to support to the national programme (STAREC), has adopted this approach. Conflict analysis and community dialogue are the first step in the stabilization process and form the backbone of the multidimensional interventions. Their goal is to reduce tensions and armed violence and contribute to peace in the communities.

Another practical aspect is to integrate social cohesion and adopt a conflict lens in, for example, the geographical targeting of priority zones, selection of beneficiaries, choice of infrastructures to be rehabilitated and other interventions. This requires adopting a balanced,

participatory, transparent and objective approach that takes into account the conflict and power dynamics to target livelihoods interventions. This often requires relying **on local knowledge and neutral informants** to understand dynamics and the process of social cohesion formation. Examples of targeting include selecting:

- Priority zones: prioritizing zones of tensions;
- Infrastructure: marketplaces and other basic community infrastructure where different community groups meet should receive priority; and
- Beneficiaries: this extends beyond gender balance, ensuring that all vulnerable groups are represented in a balanced way in keeping with the conflict dynamics.

5.1.7 SOCIAL COHESION IN MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Migration and displacement have reached unprecedented levels globally. One in seven people on the planet is on the move, with more than 258 million living outside their country of origin. Many are economic (voluntary) migrants hoping to enhance their livelihoods and send money back home. However, 65.5 million people – almost one per cent of humankind – have been displaced forcibly, including more than 25 million refugees and 40 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The majority of them are women and children.

Migration is an important enabler of sustainable development. Therefore, it has significant potential to contribute to both the well-being of individual migrants – social, economic, and physical – and to their communities of origin and destination. For migration to offer this benefit, migration-related interventions must ensure that the newcomers are integrated successfully into society. When insufficient or ineffective efforts are made to ensure integration, newcomers can become marginalized. This makes them more vulnerable to risks of all kinds, including lack of educational opportunities, language barriers and inability to find decent work.

Recognizing this, the Global Compact on Migration (GCR), which was signed in December 2018, acknowledges that safe, orderly and regular migration works for all when it takes place in a well-informed, planned and consensual manner. It commits to empowering migrants to become full members of our societies, highlighting their positive contributions, and promoting inclusion and social cohesion.

The impact of forced displacement is often associated with social disruption, tensions, grievances, social fragmentation and economic upheaval. Hence, it is important that the targeting and development of policy and programming for displaced persons does not exacerbate social tensions. The GCR recognizes the need to foster relations between refugees and host communities.

A recent World Bank study on social cohesion and forced displacement recommends using a social cohesion approach in strategy, policy and programme design as follows:

- ✎ Implement social cohesion as a longer-term strategic approach, rather than applying it to discreet activities and project interventions. Programming and strategy then contribute to social cohesion holistically within a given society;

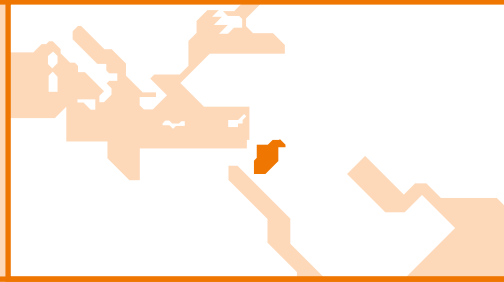
- ✎ Measure and assess the social cohesion context via social cohesion indices;
- ✎ Carry out a nuanced political economy analysis;
- ✎ Conduct a succinct analysis of the historical context that is rooted in the horizontal and vertical axes of inclusion, without undertaking an overly extensive review;
- ✎ Make transparent any bias on the part of the recipient or implementing partner that might affect such analysis; and,
- ✎ Include an assessment of emotional response to other groups or scenarios, as well as perceptions of trust, in community dynamics assessments.

BOX 5

SOCIAL COHESION IN PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT, RETURN AND (RE)-INTEGRATION

- ✎ The protracted nature of displacement has made the issue of long-term integration a relevant concern for some hosting governments.
- ✎ Over the last six years, return accounted for only 27 percent of those who exited refugee status globally.
- ✎ Large majorities of forcibly displaced persons are reluctant or unable to return to a place associated with war, trauma and a lack of economic opportunities.
- ✎ Faced with the reality that the displaced may not return in the short- to medium-term and that limited options exist for other lasting solutions, host governments are confronted with a common dilemma: Should they pursue greater socio-economic inclusion of the displaced, knowing that societal dynamics may be affected and problems may result from that very inclusion?
- ✎ However, recent evidence indicates that failing to pursue integration may have negative consequences for host countries. For example, some countries that struggle to integrate the displaced and migrants have faced residual problems such as civil unrest, citizen anger, xenophobia and a growing distrust of government.



CASE STUDY**STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION BETWEEN MIGRANTS AND HOSTS IN JORDAN**

In Jordan, UNDP is using conflict analysis to inform programming to support social cohesion between refugees and Jordanian host communities. Jordan hosts more than 1.4 million refugees from Syria, 83 percent of whom are outside the camps. This affects local communities dramatically.

In 2015, the Integrated Social Cohesion and Conflict Prevention programme was established. Governorates were selected based on their percentage of refugees, poverty and unemployment levels, and increasing levels of conflict.

A US\$ 1.7 million grant facility was established and is currently funded by Japan, Kuwait and

Switzerland. Joint refugee and host community local initiatives receive priority, with a budget of between US\$ 15,000 and US\$ 45,000 for employment, livelihoods and improvement of services. Twenty-five percent of the fund has been earmarked for youth initiatives.

Based on the findings of the conflict analysis, UNDP focuses on working with women's religious networks to support the prevention of violent extremism. Although these structures are not very visible, they exist within every mosque and Islamic organization and are highly influential both at the community level and within the family.

5.1.8 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL COHESION

Local institutions play an important role in fostering social cohesion. Both formal and informal ones constitute mechanisms that offer positive potential to prevent conflict. Formal local governance structures and their policies affect the environment for social cohesion. Vertical cohesion naturally depends on the work, accountability and performance of local governance institutions, as this is a building block of trust and relationship between people and the state. However, formal governance structures also affect horizontal cohesion. For example, they affect how inclusion is implemented in practice in developing policies, community plans and local implementation. The broad range of public services provided by the state and implemented by local structures creates a direct interface with the public and, thus, influences social cohesion in important and practical ways. The fair and effective distribution of services is fundamental if the citizenry is to view the state as treating everyone equally.

The local level is a natural arena within which to rebuild bonds and links among groups, combat exclusion and rebuild state-society relations in fragile and

conflict-affected societies. A localized approach to strengthening social cohesion is particularly relevant because local governance:

- facilitates the mapping, analysis and resolution of possible horizontal inequalities (some very localized);
- shows that certain problems affecting people's daily lives can be resolved in a straightforward manner through collective action;
- offers an opportunity to show that the state can respond effectively to local needs, such as security, delivery of essential services, such as water and sanitation, and essential development needs, such as education and health care;
- strengthens the development of a shared local identity beyond any ethnic or religious fault lines, including by proposing local development models that can demonstrate the value of shared interests over competitive strategies;
- requires convening groups to work together on public policies through representative processes, as well as via new forms of democratic participation, thus nurturing tolerance and respect across social divides;
- provides a platform to develop infrastructures for peace (e.g. local peace committees) within and among communities and can support reconciliation processes;

- facilitates integration of the unemployed and excluded in local economies; and,
- embodies the bridging role that institutions can play when they are closer to communities.

It is important to note that increased autonomy in local governance and the devolution of power to local actors can mitigate or exacerbate social divisions. An in-depth analysis of social cohesion and a conflict-sensitive approach are important, including, for example, consid-

ering pre-conflict levels of social cohesion, institutions' strengths (social and formal) and the nature of diversity in society. Programming in support of strengthening local governance must take into account the risks of increased divisions.

Higher levels of social cohesion are correlate positively with greater participation of women and youth in political life. This is a focus in several UNDP programmes related to local governance and social cohesion.

5.2

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The nature and types of risks that arise in social cohesion programming varies. Analysing risk is integral to developing effective programmes and projects.

Political risks arise in fluid and dynamic environments, with both known event-related risks, such as electoral processes, and less predictable accelerators, triggers or precipitants of conflict, such as decisions by state officials or competing groups. A critical component in mitigating political risk involves engaging social-cohesion programming as it relates to the norms and activities of state actors, such as police forces.

Concerns have been raised at **institutional or organizational levels** regarding the capture, by narrow interests, of social cohesion processes (for example, components of infrastructures for peace, such as local peace committees). Other organizational concerns include the risk of parallel institutions or the lack of complementarity among new structures. Mitigating this risk includes maintaining impartial external support, proper coordination and transparency and understanding local political dynamics.

Community-level risk is inherent in social cohesion programming, as implementation often takes place at the community level. Such engagements are difficult as communities themselves are often not cohesive and engagements may be targeted toward historically marginalized groups. This may leave other groups feeling aggrieved in turn. Moreover, a targeted community perspective may lead some communities to feel stigmatized by being set apart. Practitioners have emphasized the challenging nature of targeted programmes in particular geographical areas and when the baseline level of social cohesion is low. This can generate backlash and concerns from others about impartiality. It is important to analyse area-based or community-targeted pro-

grammes in relation to potential concerns about equity and fairness.

At the **individual level**, approaches often emphasize at-risk populations; that is, members or recruits of potentially violent extremist groups or others at the margins of society. Youth seeking to promote tolerance or an inclusive view of cohesion may be at risk, stigmatized or, in the worst case, targeted by peers or putative enemy groups alike. Particular sensitivity is required in designing youth-based programmes, with attention to individual-level risk. The most important factors include taking a realistic approach to programme objectives and design, obtaining informed consent, ensuring that participants understand the risk, and conducting continuous monitoring and evaluation. The specific risk factors that may affect for women and girls must also be analysed and addressed.



CASE STUDY

RECOVERY AND PEACEBUILDING
IN EASTERN UKRAINE

The **Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme** (RPP) was launched in 2017 in response to the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. The conflict has led to more than 10,000 deaths and the internal displacement of an estimated 1.5 million people from Donbas and Crimea. The conflict dynamics were further affected by a decentralization agenda led by the Ukrainian government and pursued by the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in the conflict-affected areas.

The nationwide Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) indicated that civic activism had increased since the conflict began and that the population viewed this activism positively. Western Ukraine reported the highest percentage of activism, as well as the lowest levels of tolerance for pro-Russian and anti-Maidan views. These areas are also marked by increased tensions between IDPs and host communities. As the conflict continues and the number of IDPs grows, the humanitarian situation worsens for the entire population, increasing the risk of reduced social cohesion in areas hosting IDPs.

To establish lasting peace, the RPP focuses on the economic recovery of eastern Ukraine. Its intermediate goals are to overcome the negative consequences of the armed conflict, reduce the risk of its reoccurrence and address existing grievances. The RPP has three components:

- 1) Economic recovery and restoration of critical infrastructure;
- 2) Local governance and decentralization reform; and,
- 3) Community security and social cohesion.

Activities include support to local governments for assessments, development plans, budgets and processes for civil society and private sector participation. A small grants programme is designed to enhance social cohesion through com-

munity mobilization. The processes include IDP and inter-group dialogue for needs assessment. To strengthen community security, the project supports coordination among local enforcement bodies, local authorities and the communities. The gender dimension and ensuring gender sensitivity are part of implementation.

With Citizen Advisory Bureaus now open in 28 cities, local authorities are more responsive to citizens' service needs. Surveys show that while trust in central authorities has decreased substantially since 2015, trust in local authorities has been stable and has even increased. The support through RPP has had a positive impact on citizens' trust in local authorities. Public consultations and hearings also improved state-society relationship. For some communities, this was the first opportunity to engage directly with local authorities. Improved recovery planning enabled some local governments to receive central government and donor funding (including through UNDP projects) and to make better use of their own resources.

Dialogues, trainings, public outreach and institution-building activities have helped convince the public and political leaders of the need for a space for IDP participation in local governance. For example, the RPP has helped establish new public councils in 54 communities in eastern Ukraine, including some that receive large numbers of IDPs (who can participate in these councils). The councils provide a forum in which to discuss local issues and identify collective solutions, which local authorities and civil society then implement. Reviews and surveys suggest that this has helped to integrate IDPs who participate more in local events and to dismantle stereotypes about eastern and western Ukraine.

Sources: SDC Learning Journey on Governance in Fragile Contexts (The case of Ukraine), 2016 and UNDP Ukraine Country Office.



© UNDP Sierra Leone

5.3

MONITORING AND EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS

UNDP has a well-developed programme planning system that integrates monitoring and evaluation. Some practitioners shared the following conclusions regarding monitoring and evaluation:

- ✎ One of the main challenges of measuring social cohesion is establishing a baseline and indicators, where perception studies can be a starting point. It is important to set aside time and resources to assess and develop indicators.

Examples of tools that can be used as measures include:

 - ✎ Applications and web-based solutions, both before and after implementation. They offer a systematic way to determine what has changed since the intervention.
 - ✎ Geo-spatial analysis to evaluate local conditions of social cohesion; for example, in locally specific index measures. They may be helpful in observing changes over time, monitoring particular interventions or efforts to strengthen cohesion, and determining where and to what extent cohesion has improved.
- ✎ An alternative methodology involves identifying communities with similar attributes, such as randomized control trials, and conducting pairwise comparisons of the communities where social cohesion has become stronger and others where it has remained unchanged or declined. Such comparisons can help identify the underlying causal factors or key determinants of efforts to strengthen cohesion.
- ✎ When planning for M&E, a distinction should be made between indirect programmes, whose primary objectives do not include social cohesion, but that help to strengthen it, and direct programmes that do focus on social cohesion.
- ✎ M&E must be realistic, flexible and adaptive to measure progress in social cohesion and needs for adjustment throughout the process.
- ✎ Gender indicators must be included to continuously capture the gender dimension and, possibly, adapt programming in relation to social cohesion.
- ✎ Social cohesion stories may be a useful way to note progress. UNDP could further develop story telling as a way to measure results, using clear, accessible language.







6

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Strengthening social cohesion is essential to countering troubling contemporary concerns about increased enmity, hate speech and conflict along identity lines. At the heart of the concept is the realization that, ultimately, trust in governance and trust within society are required if countries and communities are to realize sustainable peace. This, in turn, requires a deep commitment to living together peacefully and working together toward a shared vision of a prosperous future.

Strengthening social cohesion takes time and persistence. UNDP's work requires continuously developing partnerships, to sustain and build networks, and reinforcing institutions. This is linked directly to improving social cohesion, taking both direct and indirect approaches. Programme implementation should ensure that appropriate partners are involved who have relevant experience, strong networks, social capital and high levels of trust with stakeholders.

These processes often involve a relationship with both governments and local partners. Sometimes, they also involve considerations of international human rights law when discussing social cohesion. Skills are required to **maintain neutrality and impartiality**. This also calls for clear and balanced communication with all stakeholders. Social cohesion programming would appear to be designed best at multiple levels of analysis simultaneously, including individual capacities, networks, insider-mediator capacities and institutions.

Practitioners emphasized the need to **link programming directly to the findings of a proper social cohesion assessment**. This assessment should inform both the challenges and the approaches to strengthening key institutions, networks or relationships. Gaining a correct understand of context dynamics also requires avoiding assumptions or accepting conventional wisdom. Continuously updating an assessment ensures programme effectiveness and the opportunity to mitigate new risks.

As mentioned, **gender must be integrated** in social cohesion assessments to provide a comprehensive picture. UNDP must also use all of its internal resources, including staff who understand the local language, culture of communication, and local history and who can interpret behaviour, particularly when interacting with local actors. Such in-depth knowledge helps anchor social cohesion to evidence-based data, for example, perception surveys.

Practitioners have identified concrete challenges in programme and project development and design. **Rather than start with the most contentious issues**, they recommend identifying those that offer the greatest promise for progress and where networks of support and connections exist. As with all UNDP programmes, social cohesion programmes need to include a timeline for disengaging and a realistic exit strategy early to ensure sustainability.

Human-rights based initiatives are important to sustainable cohesion. There may be government entities, institutions and networks where competing claims to rights are being negotiated and reconciled. Human rights are not foreign concepts to local societies today. Thus, discussions about rights could focus on **localized conceptualizations of justice** and understanding of how these rights relate to efforts to achieve national integration.

The 'do no harm' principle, or conflict sensitivity, applies to social cohesion programming in important ways. It means that aspects that may, inadvertently, exacerbate divisions, rather than help to heal them, should be avoided. It requires careful attention to project design, partner selection and capacity development approaches. **Inclusive design processes help identify risks** and challenges that may be highly context-specific.

Social cohesion is a broad concept. Assessment and monitoring methodologies are constantly evolving, creating **new and innovative approaches**. They could include social media monitoring and 'big data' approaches, as well as new cultural engagements, such as youth-oriented museum curation. New partnerships focused on historical aspects, such as memorials, and the role of pride-of-place and a shared environment could be other avenues for innovation. Assessment and programmes both call for innovation.







ANNEXES



In addition to the mentioned SCORE and PSCAR methodologies for assessment and measurement of social cohesion, a country level assessment guide is presented here. It is developed for conducting a country-level social cohesion analysis. The assessment approach was developed by independent researchers for an eight-country multinational research project (Cox and Sisk 2017)⁴⁰. Please note it has not been developed nor adjusted for UNDP use specifically. It serves as an additional inspiration for assessment tools on social cohesion.

I. ANALYSING THE CONTEXT

1.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- How have previous experiences of war, civil war, or mass violence shaped contemporary social cleavages and conflict dynamics?
- What are key historical factors that display “path dependence” in this case? That is, to what extent do colonial era administration practices, boundaries, land tenure regimes, or resource extraction strategies, etc., impact contemporary social cleavages and conflict dynamics?

1.2 PROXIMATE CONTEXT

- What are the main contemporary conflict trends in this case (e.g. cycles of election-related ethnic violence; urban or rural ethno-communal riots; symbolic, religious violence; inter-personal violence; gender-based violence; small arms violence; armed robbery)?
- What are the principal findings from extant conflict vulnerability and risk assessment analysis on the underlying drivers of conflict in this context (e.g. inequality, poverty, youth unemployment, ethnic competition over land or other economic resources.)?

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS: RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN CIVIL SOCIETY

2.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- What is the overall pattern of society of identity-based groups?
- What is the structure and nature of religious identity? How significant is religious difference in relation to other identity-based cleavages?
- What is the organizational structure of dominant religious institutions (e.g. hierarchical and bureaucratic versus acephalous and localized)?

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PATTERNS: HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES

- What are the principal underlying drivers or patterns of deprivation, poverty, and inequality? Are there demographic pressures on scarce resources? High levels of population movement? Rural-urban migration? Food insecurity?
- To what extent, and how, do demographic factors affect the dynamics of conflict? What evidence relates to the effects of a youth bulge? Is there demography-related high unemployment among particular sectors, regions, or identity groups?
- What is the general nature of income inequality in the state (GINI coefficient)? Does poverty overlap with ethnic divisions? To what degree do ethnic divisions “permeate” the economy?
- What types of social safety nets are available for minority groups? How functional are they? To what extent are non-state systems providing such services, rather than the state? To what extent do minority groups have the capacity to access welfare provisions, social safety net programs?
- To what extent and in what manner are formal wealth-sharing agreements or distributional formulas in place? To what extent is the state capable of extracting and redistributing surplus resources? Is there low tax extraction capacity and lack of a “tax mediated social contract”?
- Is there a large “shadow economy” that provides large population with subsistence?

⁴⁰ Prof. Fletcher Cox of William-Jewell College is thanked for his role in the original development of the country-level social cohesion guide and sample indicators.



- Do particular resource production practices (generate environmental degradation, food insecurity, or rising resource scarcity that could increase horizontal inequalities, decrease social cohesion and thus function as a “conflict threat multiplier”?)

3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

3.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- Is there evidence of a recent process through which there has been “invention of enmity” among competing ethnic or religious groups? Or, are there “long antagonisms” and “ancient hatreds” among ethno-religious groups? Or, are there new forms of “modern hatreds” emerging due to political or economic change?
- How do the actors define stories of “historical injustice” among ethnic groups? Are there particular historical injustices that groups believe have never been reconciled?
- Do political elites have power over mechanisms that operate to “construct” ethnic identities such as the media or using political platforms to promote metaphors, myths that create “imagined communities,” or help shape an “enemy image” of other ethnic groups?
- What are the conclusions of social surveys or other attitudinal studies on measures such as social distance, social capital/trust in society/ trust in government? How do these measures converge or vary along a wide range of social criteria (region, age, rural/urban, home language use)?

3.2 PATTERNS OF IDENTITY POLITICS

- Are identity groups highly concentrated within particular areas, or are they dispersed across the state within various urban areas?
- Do elites appeal to a mythical place, space, or “homeland”?
- Is there an “irredentist” element in domestic politics? That is, do elites make ethnicity a force for mobilization by engaging another state that is supposedly oppressing an ethnic group living outside of the home country’s borders?

3.3 SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AND ORGANIZATION

- Is there evidence of strong, voluntary, crosscutting civil society groups (e.g., within labor markets or community activism)?
- Is there a high degree of “collective efficacy”? That is, to what extent do groups have access to effective community-based institutions for the management of local conflicts?
- Do marginalized ethnic groups have venues through which to voice grievances? If so, to what extent are such grievances actually addressed?
- To what extent do minority groups have the ability to “organize and act politically”?
- Do ethnic groups have standing paramilitaries, or are they quickly able to organize of youth militias for violent purposes?

4. POLITICAL DIMENSIONS: STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- Does the state have the capacity to support effective police institutions? Does the capacity and effectiveness of policing extend to periphery regions?
- Under conditions of state fragility, do particular groups face an “ethnic security dilemma”?
- Are there power-sharing institutions in place (e.g. consociationalism or federalism) such that ethnic elites must cooperate with elites from opposing ethnic groups? What is the extent of cross-cutting political participation? Do multi-ethnic parties win elections?
- Is there a linking of democratization with a high level of “politicization of ethnic divisions” that creates an “out-bidding effect”?
- Has there been effort at direct “institutional engineering” toward social cohesion for the particular conflict context? If so, is it working in this case?

4.2 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND ELITE BEHAVIOR

- How deeply are ethnic divisions institutionalized within the state apparatus?
- To what extent do state institutions shape the actions of political elites? To what extent do formal state institutions constrain or enable interactions that create exclusion or cohesion?



- Do “predatory elites” use extant social divisions to mobilize political support, or, “direct public frustration away from their own exploitative behavior?”
- Do elites use power and institutions of the state to protect and promote the interests of their own group over the interests of others? Are elites using formal institutions (constitutions, laws, rules) to “attain power in the face of a perceived threat to the dominant ethnic group”?

4.3 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: ELECTORAL POLITICS

- How does the electoral system affect the degree of inclusivity in various levels of political institutions? What are other unique features of the system: nomination rules, candidacy, party restrictions, etc. that affect inclusivity?
- How does the electoral system map – boundary demarcation and districting – relate to social divisions? Is the electoral system likely to promote “bridging” or “bonding strategies” in political parties to gain seats?
- To what extent do incumbent political elites “play the ethnic card” in order to maintain power and garner political support from more extremist ethnic political groups? To what extent do elites employ ethnicity as a means to maintain or gain political power? Is the use of ethnic rhetoric a successful strategy for political entrepreneurs?
- How does the electoral system affect party formation, and what are the implications for broader social cohesion?

5. POLITICAL DIMENSIONS: STATE – SOCIETY PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

5.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- What is the nature of the current political discourse around “social cohesion”? According to leaders and party rhetoric, who will and will not be part of the developing “nation”?
- What are the dominant political narratives? Do they involve “hate speech,” stereotyping, ethnic propaganda? How contentious are political struggles?
- Do political elites use “ethnic” conflicts as reference points to mobilize support for particular purposes, such as the extension of state power to periphery regions or the mobilization of new constituencies?

- To what extent is the state perceived as “neutral” – seeking to manage and regulate ethnic conflict (less vulnerability); or is the state perceived to be promoting the interests of the dominant ethnic group (abusing state apparatus to conduct violence against or exclude minorities)? To what degree have ethnic or religious identities become interrelated with a conceptualization of the “nation” and the state? Do religious and ethnic ideals in the country tend to inform more constructive or more destructive forms of nationalism?

5.2 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: INCLUSIVITY ANALYSIS

- Is the country experiencing a particular stage of democratization? How does the sequencing and pathway of the transition process affect actor calculations of uncertainty and their political future?
- Is political competition meaningful? That is, are elections free and fair? Are elections legitimate?
- Is political participation inclusive? That is, can all groups of society equally participate in elections and politics?
- Are there protections (liberties and freedoms) for individuals to express diverse views and participate in the state in diverse ways?

5.3 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

- What is the nature of service delivery by the state, and in what ways do service-delivery issues affect social cohesion at the national, regional, or local level?
- Is there a high degree of clientelism or patronage with the public administration system? Are state resources, jobs, and contracts allocated on an ethnic basis?
- Are there rules-of-law within the state where “cross-cutting cleavages” have been institutionalized? That is, are there language laws, or laws around religion that overlap or cross-cut ethnic division and help foster more centrist political behavior?
- Does the justice system and rule of law extend protections to all groups? How are the legal structure for minority rights and religious tolerance perceived in society?
- How does language policy affect social interactions?
- Are there ethnic divisions that permeate the formal state military structure? What is the perception of nature of the police force: how trusted are they in society?



6. INTERNATIONAL-DOMESTIC INTERACTIONS

6.1 TRANSNATIONAL DYNAMICS

- To what extent is cross-border or internal migration a divisive issue?
- Are there spillover effects from other conflict or fragile environments in the region?
- How well organized are diaspora groups? Are there particularly successful (economically) diaspora groups that fuel, or dampen, tension in the country?

6.2 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ACTOR ANALYSIS

- What is the nature and extent of international engagement through development cooperation presence? What is the structure of the intervention and its changing terms over time? To what extent does the state have autonomy to determine or direct international development cooperation?
- Who are the main multi-lateral international organizations involved in conflict stabilization and post conflict recovery efforts? Are there particular civil society actors that play large roles in the conflict? What are their interests and core competencies?
- To what extent and in what manner have international development actors incorporated conflict assessment and social-cohesion objectives directly in their overall strategy, program, and/or project design? Is aid directed at particular local groups or particular regions as part of an articulated strategy for social cohesion?
- What are the primary interventions that aim to directly improve social cohesion at the level of civil society (e.g. dialogue, local peacebuilding, etc.)? What are the primary interventions that aim to indirectly improve social cohesion at the level of the state (e.g. governance reforms, aid to marginalized groups, etc.)?
- To what extent and with what effect has there been systematic assessment of conflict dynamics among development partners? To what extent do interventions for peace align with the main conflict drivers?
- What are the specific elements that could inform understanding of the conditions under which aid interacts with informal institutions to contribute to social cohesion?

7. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- What are overall characterizations of the nature of social cohesion in the context under consideration?
- What lessons have development practitioners learned on effective and ineffective forms of social cohesion programming?
- What are the specific lessons in terms of: a) overall strategy of donor cooperation and interaction with the host government; b) program design and interaction among programmatic interventions; and c) project design, particularly for sustainability and capacity development?



ANNEX 2: SAMPLE ASSESSMENT INDICATORS

The dimensions, sub-dimensions and suggested indicators provide a broad menu of potential indicators. However, they were been developed specifically for UNDP

programming. Social cohesion is a broad concept and UNDP programming spans large thematic areas, which is reflected in the many and diverse potential indicators.

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicators
Vertical relations: objective (behavioural)	<p>Personal and family safety and security;</p> <p>Accountable, transparent public administration: responsive governance institutions that deliver services fairly across social segments</p> <p>Legal frameworks that articulate rights of minorities and marginalized groups</p> <p>Inclusive institutions mandated to monitor and enforce norms of inclusivity and rejection of discrimination, scapegoating or xenophobia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Armed conflict measures → Armed violence measures → One-sided violence measures → Electoral participation → Tax remittance and avoidance → Civic engagement: party membership → Extent of free association → Extent of free expression → Extent of representation
Vertical relations: subjective (attitudinal)	<p>Access to justice</p> <p>Voice and participation</p> <p>Trust in actors</p> <p>Trust in institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Satisfaction with personal life → Evaluation of regime performance: water, land, housing, health care, education → Perceptions of corruption → Perceptions of the police → Trust in the judicial process → Trust in executive measures → Trust in parliament → Trust in local government → Trust in media → Trust in religious authorities
Horizontal dynamics: objective (behavioural)	<p>Inclusive societies: social and economic participation</p> <p>Cross-cutting social networks and relationships</p> <p>Inter-community ethnic, sectarian, religious and racial relationships in society: social norms and practices of diversity and inclusivity</p> <p>Rituals, memorials or cultural icons devoted to inclusivity and multiculturalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Gini coefficient (by youth and minorities) → Income shares (by youth and minorities) → Poverty measures (by youth and minorities) → Unemployment rate (by youth and minorities) → Informal sector employment (by youth and minorities) → Literacy (by youth and minorities) → Health outcomes (by youth and minorities) → Participation in voluntary associations → Charitable giving → Ethno-linguistic fractionalization → Elite fractionalization → Linguistic fractionalization → Frequency of contact across identity groups → Frequency of economic exchanges across identity groups
Horizontal dynamics: subjective (attitudinal)	<p>Inclusive visions of the nation and community: shared norms, values, acceptance, and tolerance</p> <p>Trust in the other: perceptions of belongingness or isolation</p> <p>Attitudes: recognition, tolerance and affirmation of minorities; social distance</p> <p>Symbolic communication: common narratives in culture, music, art and sport that reinforce a sense of commonality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Perceptions of active discrimination → Levels of intergroup anxiety/fear → Measures of cultural distance → Importance of belonging to an ethnic group → Perceptions of people of other ethnic groups → Perceptions of people of other religious groups → Association with or loyalty to an inclusive national identity → Support for racial tolerance → Support for gender tolerance → Support for tolerance of the disabled → Support for intermarriage → Support for affirmative policies to advance marginalized populations



POTENTIAL INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES RELATED TO KEY FEATURES OF SOCIAL COHESION/FRAGMENTATION

HORIZONTAL INDICATORS: SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

- **Ethnic heterogeneity:** Geo-referencing of Ethnic Groups (<http://www.icr.ethz.ch/data/other/greg>), or Ethno-linguistic Fragmentation (ELF) Fractionalization Dataset (<http://www.nsd.uib.no/macrodatabank/set.html?id=16&sub=1>); Ethnic Composition Dataset, PRIO (<http://www.prio.no/Data/Economic-and-Socio-Demographic/Ethnic-Composition-Data/>)
- **Intermarriage statistics:** National statistics, or UN Statistics Division, Demographic and Social Statistics Collection (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/mar/>)
- **Social trust (ethnic and religious), social participation, and cross-cutting voluntarism:** World Values Survey (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>); the “Barometers” (<http://www.afrobarometer.org/>; <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latino/latinobarometro.jsp>; <http://www.asianbarometer.org/newenglish/surveys/>); Indices of Social Development (<http://www.indsocdev.org/>)
- **Inter-group cohesion:** World Bank Social Development Indicators (ISS at the Hague) (<http://data.worldbank.org/>)
- **Social capital:** World Bank Assessment (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment>), or Social Capital Indices (<http://www.prosperity.com/Subindexes-8.aspx>)
- **Level of ethnic and religious tension:** International Country Risk Guide (<http://www.prsgroup.com/icrg.aspx>)
- **Civil society strength and voluntary associations:** Levels of activism, Access to Information, Voluntary clubs and associations; and “Collective efficacy”: Civicus Data, Enabling Environment Index (<https://civicus.org/>), or Indices of Social Development (<http://www.indsocdev.org/>)
- **Security perceptions and interpersonal safety:** World Bank Social Development Indicators (ISS at the Hague) (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment>)
- **Levels of inter-group violence and criminality:** Cross-National Time Series Data Archive (<http://www.databanksinternational.com/>) or SCAD (<https://www.strausscenter.org/scad.html>), or Global Peace Index (<http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/about-gpi>), or PRIO Urban Social Disturbance in Africa and Asia (<http://www.prio.no/Data/Economic-and-Socio-Demographic/Urban-Social-Disturbance-in-Africa-and-Asia/>)
- **Gender equality:** degree of non-discrimination against women, Indices of Social Development (<http://www.indsocdev.org/>), or Gender Inequality Index (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/>)

VERTICAL INDICATORS: STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

- **Regime type:** Polity IV (<http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>)
- **Provision of security:** (<http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Measuring-Security-Sector-Governance>), or monopoly on the use of force, Bertelsmann Transformation Index (<http://www.bti-project.de/?&L=1>)
- **Armed violence occurrence:** UCDP/PRIO Armed Violence Dataset (<http://www.prio.no/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>)
- **Discrimination and minority exclusion:** Minorities at Risk Project (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>), or Gallup World Poll (<http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/en-us/worldpoll.aspx>)
- **Trust in parliaments/state institutions:** local polling data (e.g. Kenya, Ipsos Synovate: <http://www.ipsos.co.ke/home/index.php>), or World Values Survey (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>) or Barometers
- **Political instability:** Economist Intelligence Unit, Political Instability Index (http://viewswire.eiu.com/site_info.asp?info_name=social_unrest_table&page=noads), or Political Instability Task Force (<http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm>)
- **Corruption perceptions:** Transparency International (<http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/>)
- **Good governance:** World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators (<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>), or World Governance Assessment (<http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/5531-world-governance-assessment>), or Deterioration of Public Services (<http://ffp.statesindex.org/>)
- **Social welfare spending (inclusivity of):** National statistics, or OECD (<http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/social-expenditure-databasesocx.htm>), or IDA Resource Allocation Index (<http://www.worldbank.org/ida/IRAI-2011.html>)
- **Quality of public administration:** World Bank, Public Sector management and Institutions (<http://www.worldbank.org/ida/IRAI-2011.html>)



LEADERSHIP INDICATORS: INCLUSIVE POLITICS

- ↳ **Inclusion of minorities:** Indices of Social Development (<http://www.indsocdev.org/>), or Minorities at Risk, Political Discrimination Index (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>)
- ↳ **Patterns of exclusion from authority:** Minorities at Risk, Political Discrimination Index (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>)
- ↳ **Politically relevant ethnic groups:** Ethnic Power Relations Database: (<http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/epr>)
- ↳ **Unified or fragmented elites:** Fund for Peace, Fractionalized Elites (<http://ffp.statesindex.org/>)

STRUCTURAL FACTORS AND INDICATORS

- ↳ **Income inequality (or inequality of potential for human development):** GINI (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD>) or HDI (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/>), or MPI (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/>)
- ↳ **Multi-dimensional Exclusion Index:** (e.g. Nepal – World Bank: <http://un.org.np/attachments/nepal-multidimensional-exclusion-index>)

- ↳ **Levels of economic discrimination:** Minorities at Risk, Economic Discrimination Index
(<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>)
- ↳ **Uneven development along group lines:** Fund for Peace (<http://ffp.statesindex.org/>)
- ↳ **Labour market discrimination/exclusion:** Minorities at Risk Project (Economic Exclusion indicators, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>)
- ↳ **Aid flows:** as percentage of government expenditures or per capita (<http://go.worldbank.org/E3T-MO2RJXO>)
- ↳ **Tax citizenship** (percentage of population paying taxes): National statistics
- ↳ **Social or economic mobility indicators:** National Statistics
- ↳ **Demographic change:** National statistics – migration inflows and outflows (Fund for Peace (<http://ffp.statesindex.org/>), or World Bank World Development Indicators, Net Migration (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM>), or PRIO Demographic Data (<http://www.prio.no/Data/Economic-and-Socio-Demographic/Demographic-Data/>))
- ↳ **Percentage of non-citizens in population,** or long-term residents without citizenship: National Statistics, or World Bank Social Development Indicators (<http://data.worldbank.org/>)



United Nations Development Programme
304 East 45th Street, FF Building, New York, 10017
www.undp.org