Social Cohesion

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Session Aims

1. Introduction to social cohesion
2. Reflecting on the relevance of social cohesion in your work.
Exercise: When I hear ‘social cohesion’ I think of...

• What are the first ideas that come to mind when you hear ‘social cohesion’?
• Think about words, ideas, metaphors, pictures etc
• Write them down
• Come put them on the board
What is Social Cohesion?

- Based on their context, different societies understand and define and approach social cohesion differently.
- It’s dependent upon the cultural, economic, political, historical, technological factors of a given community, state or country.
- No single definition, but a set of common themes and ideas.
• One that works towards the wellbeing of all, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers everyone the opportunity to prosper and advance peacefully.
RAFT’s approach supporting Multi-Donor Trust Funds

• Social Cohesion: The degree to which a community or society is characterized by strong bonds (interpersonal, communal and societal), and by values/attitudes that make it resilient to the push and pull factors that cause social tension, segregation/fragmentation and violent conflict.
Sample Countries

- *We, the citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people, regardless of race, language or religion, to build a democratic society, based on justice and equality, so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for our nation.* (Singapore National Pledge)

- “...Participation and inclusion...where diversity is a strength.” (Canada, Social Cohesion Roadmap)

- “Social cohesion is the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization” (Council of Europe)
Organizations

• The common bonds that unify different people that share common space or membership (United Nations)

• The glue that bonds society together, promoting harmony, a sense of community, and a degree of commitment to promoting a common good (World Bank)
Myanmar
Key Learning

• Social Cohesion is the measure of the ‘glue’ or ‘ingredients’ – mind-sets, attitudes, behaviours and actions, and policies, systems and processes - that prevents violence and builds peace.
• At many levels: family, organization, sports team, village, state, country etc.
• It is not the absence of conflict; but durability to conflict and the ability to deal with conflict and transform conflict.
• Horizontal (between groups) and vertical (people and institutions).
• Based on their context, different societies understand and define and approach social cohesion differently.
• No single definition, but a set of common themes and ideas.
Conflict and Violence

“A disagreement through which the parties involved perceives a threat to their needs, interests or concerns.” (Mayer 1990)

“If channeled improperly, conflict has the potential to intensify and erupt into violence.” (UN 2003)
1. **Personal**: mental and emotional aspects of human experience.
2. **Relational**: relationship between people, groups, institutions etc.
3. **Structural**: the ways people build and organize social, economic and institutional relationships and decision-making.
4. **Cultural**: patterns of group life/social norms and values.
Group Work: Thinking Hats

Listen to Instructions

Complete Exercise

Elect a team representative and share key points from your group discussion in 5mts
What is Social Cohesion ‘Mainstreaming’?

- Assessing the situation using a social cohesion lens (descriptive)
- Promoting/strengthening social cohesion through our actions/work (prescriptive)
Exercise: When I hear ‘social cohesion’ I think of...

• What are new ideas that come to mind when you hear ‘social cohesion’?
• Think about words, ideas, metaphors, pictures etc
• Write them down
• Come put them on the board
Closing Reflection

1) What is the one thing I learned, which if I start doing now, can make a big difference to my work/output/contribution?

2) What’s support/resources/tools do I need to move forward?
Thank You Everyone.