

**Summary of the E-dialogue
On
Creating an Inclusive Society:
Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration**

23 May – 20 June 2007

Introduction:

The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in collaboration with UNESCO and UN-HABITAT, organized a multi-stakeholder web-based dialogue on “Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration”, from 23 May to 20 June 2007. The result of the discussion will be an important input to the Expert Group Meeting to be organized by DSPD/UNDESA, in collaboration with UNESCO and UN-HABITAT in September 2007. The E-dialogue was attended by various stakeholders with diverse backgrounds across regions. The following is a summary of the four week on-line discussion, and a synthesis of the views expressed by the participants on how to create an inclusive society, including practical strategies to achieve this goal.

Background:

The World Summit for Social Development was held at Copenhagen in 1995 to forge agreement on social challenges and responses to them. It chose social integration as one of three themes, together with poverty eradication and employment creation. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action established a new consensus to place people at the centre of our concerns for sustainable development.

Member States made commitments to promote social integration, to create “a society for all”, through fostering inclusive societies that are stable, safe and just, and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

Objectives of the E-Dialogue:

The objectives of the E-dialogue were to:

- Explore essential elements necessary to create an inclusive society.
- Compile current initiatives and existing approaches in measuring the health of societies (i.e., social inclusion/exclusion, citizen’s participation, safety or security) and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify the methodologies and information gathering processes which could be used for measuring social integration/inclusion/cohesion.
- Create a knowledge-base of good practices in this area.

- Establish a network of researchers, practitioners, and local communities and NGOs to work together to build a safe, stable and just society for all.

Profile of Participants:

There were a total of 252 participants with the following affiliations:

- Consultant/Expert: 19
- Faith-based organization: 3
- Foundation: 2
- Government (national): 10
- International local network: 4
- International Organization: 21
- Local Government: 6
- NGO/CSO: 45
- Others: 5
- Private Sector: 5
- Regional Organization: 1
- Research Institute: 12
- United Nations Dept. agencies, & specialized agencies: 26
- University/Academia: 53
- Youth organization/network: 28
- Unknown: 10

The participants were based in the following geographical locations:

Europe and CIS: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and UK.

Africa: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.

Western Asia: Iraq and Lebanon.

North America: USA and Canada.

Latin America and the Caribbean: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, and St. Maarten.

Asia and the Pacific: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji Islands, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal, Singapore, and Thailand.

Summary of the E-Dialogue:

Introduction

During the E-dialogue, participants discussed the following major themes: the critical elements necessary for creating an inclusive society, obstacles to social inclusion, measuring social inclusion/cohesion/integration, and existing indicators. The E-dialogue also attempted to learn from existing policies and interventions at the local, national and international level that promoted societal inclusivity. One important question addressed was the notion of whether to implement policy targeted towards specific social groups that have been traditionally excluded (i.e. racial minorities, religious groups, etc.), or a universal policy that is applicable to all regardless of social context. In an attempt to discuss methods by which social inclusion may be measured, it was necessary to examine past case studies that were able to accomplish that goal. Some of the existing indicators that were found to be very important yet difficult to measure were qualitative characteristics, in which case the question of specific contextual understandings was again raised

Synthesis of the views expressed by participants:

1. Critical Elements Necessary for Creating an Inclusive Society:

Rule of Law:

Respect for the rule of law, both at national and international levels, is critical for creating an inclusive society. Every citizen, no matter what his or her economic resources, political status, or social standing, must be treated equally under the law. Legal instruments ensure the guiding principles that will guarantee equity, justice and equal opportunities for all citizens. Violators of human rights should be brought to justice. Maintaining the security of all individuals and their living environment is paramount in creating a feeling of inclusion and an atmosphere of participation in society.

Judiciary:

The impartial, accountable judiciary is necessary for giving weight to the opinions of those who defend the inclusiveness of the society at the local, regional and national levels. The judicial profession, which serves to protect just societies, must be inclusive and serve as a role model to represent equity, social justice, and human dignity.

Education:

Education can empower those who are marginalized or excluded from participating in communication, discussions, and decision-making. In this sense, free, compulsory, functional and qualitative 'basic' education was pointed out to be crucial. At the same time, education will provide opportunities to learn the history and culture of one's own society, as well as that of other societies, which will cultivate the understanding of, sensitivity for, and appreciation of other societies, cultures and religions. It also helps people to understand the

character of the oppressions, exploitations, exclusions and destructions committed against humanity. Learning about these historical processes and changes allows people to understand the way in which they and others have been affected by socially inclusive or exclusive policies, which ultimately influences the values, choices and judgments of individuals, in particular, those who are in decision-making positions.

Shared Common Goal/Vision:

There is a need to create positive images of an inclusive society of the future, and have those images shared and understood by every member of society. Potent images of the future can act like a magnet drawing society towards its envisioned future. A society with no vision for the future indicates a society in decline. Societies that maintain a unity of purpose, or a shared common goal embraced by the community, and encourage broad-based stakeholder participation in the formulation of that goal, will be more inclusive as every member will be working synergistically towards a unified objective.

Cultural Pluralism/Respect for diversity:

Inclusive societies embrace a notion of tolerance for and appreciation of cultural diversity. This includes societies that celebrate multiple and diverse expressions of selves. By celebrating diversity, there is a recognition and affirmation of the differences between and among members of society, which enables societies to move away from labeling, categorizing, and classifying people, towards more inclusive policies. Also, enabling a diversity of opinions provides the checks and balances crucial for the development of society, while allowing for the greatest amount of diverse opinions to enter every debate.

Strong Civil Society (civil rights, civic responsibility, civic engagement, citizenship and mutual trust):

A strong civil society, that is built on respect for freedom of expression, freedom to organize oneself and the freedom to assemble, is a basis for inclusive societies. In inclusive/cohesive societies, government and civil society build a strong partnership for creating horizontal connections among divided groups as well as vertical connections between the state and its citizens. There must be freedom for people to express diverse views and develop unconventional unique ideas, and members of society must have the confidence to engage and interact with each other, and build mutual trust while acknowledging their differences.

A strong civil society fosters a respect for the rights, dignity and privileges of citizens, while espousing and ensuring their responsibilities within a State. Not only do citizens enjoy freedom of expression, but also they should feel obliged to carry out their responsibilities to the State while being accountable for their actions. This element is particularly relevant in promotion of social inclusion of the minority and disadvantaged members of the society in at the local level. Conducting free, fair and credible elections is crucial to inclusive societies, as this would ensure citizens being part and parcel of a society.

Equal Opportunities for Active Participation:

Inclusive societies are characterized by active participation in civic, social, economic and political activities by individuals, both at the local and national levels. A society where most of its citizens, if not all, feel that they are playing a part, have access to their basic needs/livelihoods, and are provided with the opportunity to participate in discussions relevant to their concerns, is a society that will best foster principles of inclusivity. In order to encourage all-inclusive participation, there must be universal access to public infrastructures and facilities. To create and sustain inclusive societies, it is a pre-requisite that all members of society are able to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Equitable Distribution of Economic and Social Resources:

Equity in the distribution of wealth and resources is another critical element of inclusive societies. How the resources are allocated and utilized will significantly affect the orientation of a society, either towards more integrated, inclusive society, or an exclusive, polarized, and disintegrated one. Therefore, socio-economic policies should be geared towards managing equitable distribution and equal opportunities.

Inclusive Policies and Institutions:

The use of policies that are embrative at the national and local levels provides the required space for an inclusive society. Inclusive policies, instructions and programs that are sensitive to and cater to the less advantaged and physically challenged need to be put in place in all areas/sectors (i.e., public health and public mental health were suggested as an example), and effectively implemented, monitored, and evaluated. In particular, the need for a system of monitoring and evaluation was pointed out, as this serves to demonstrate whether inclusivity was actually achieved, as well as highlight areas for improvement. In this context benchmarking was suggested to be an effective tool (i.e., place-making in cities) to create an inclusive society.

Good Governance and Representative Leadership

Effective leadership is crucial to the development of an inclusive society. Where leadership is not representative of the society, a disconnection between the people and their leaders will be eventually formed. Popular participation of citizens in all decision-making and policy formulation processes is necessary at all levels of governance. Likewise, there must be an effort made to achieve transparency and accountability by all decision-makers and stakeholders. The most common way of addressing this critical element is by engaging in open consultations with citizens about municipal issues such as the budget, and enhancing the free and timely flow of information to citizens and other stakeholders.

Equal access to Pubic Information, Public Infrastructures and Facilities:

Equal access to public information, public infrastructures and facilities plays an important role to create an inclusive society, as it will make popular participation possible with well-informed citizens. Information that pertains to the society, such as what a community owns, generates, or benefits from, should be made available to all. Collective participation, through accepted representations of all classes and backgrounds, in the planning, implementation and

evaluation of community activities should be sought after. Publication/information sharing and increasing the accessibility of the community's activities will eliminate doubts and suspicions which could otherwise create a sense of exclusion. The mass media can be used as an effective tool to educate and enlighten members of society.

Public infrastructures and facilities (such as community centers, recreational facilities, public libraries, resource centers with internet facilities, well maintained public schools, clinics, water supplies and sanitations), and their accessibility to all citizens, are important elements for an inclusive society. These are the basic services which will create, when partly or fully put into place, conditions for people to feel inclusive by not suffering the painful consequence of being unable to afford them. As long as both the advantaged and disadvantaged have equal access to or benefit from these public facilities and services, they will all feel less burdened by their differences in socio-economic status, thus alleviating a possible sense of exclusion or frustration.

Effective Urban Management:

The current rapid increase in the demographic profiles of developing countries has made many cities unable to accommodate their burgeoning populations, and rates of poverty and social exclusion have increased. In order to tackle the problem, there is a need to further the decentralization process to the community level. From a city's perspective, this means that local governments should subsidize authority and resources to the neighborhood level.

Enhancing the efficiency of the delivery of public services and promoting local economic development, particularly at the municipal level, is considered to be critical. For example, cities are increasingly working with key stakeholders towards maximizing cost effectiveness in the delivery of public services to ensure local revenue collection. By scrutinizing wasteful spending, societies are able to utilize more resources and energy for public good, specifically in promoting an inclusive society.

2. Obstacles for Social Inclusion:

Maintaining unity among diverse groups:

Maintaining unity while accommodating diversity is the guiding principle of social integration/inclusion, and many societies have, in fact, developed certain mechanisms for accommodating the diverse perspectives of its citizens. However, managing diverse social groups was identified as a challenge, especially in societies with no or less-advanced democracies, or those who still struggle with the colonial legacy. In order to create an inclusive society, there has to be unity among the diverse citizens that comprise the society. Achieving this sense of unity- social cohesion- can be a challenge, as accommodating different perspectives, values, and cultures is a necessary but difficult process. There is a need for a reassessment and re-consultation, where the grievances of various groups can be addressed.

Lack of democracy, or “Inclusive Democracy”:

In the absence of one standard form of political system that is globally accepted, many societies consider that the presence of good governance and democracy is fundamental to creating an inclusive society. However, how they understand/interpret/practice democracy varies, and these differences pose questions for some. It is not uncommon that some societies, while working towards democratic goals, implement non-democratic policies in practice, which facilitates the creation of a segment of its population whose mindset is non-inclusive (i.e., an elite class), further exacerbating social exclusion. It was also pointed out that democracy, without a proper justice system, can divide, instead of unite, the population, as democracy can be understood differently by different parts of society.

Lack of good governance/leadership:

Lack of good governance lack of support, lack of commitment, lack of clear policy, lack of know-how - was identified as an obstacle. In order to create an inclusive society, those who are selected as representatives of certain sections of society should be accountable for their people, and reflect the needs and concerns of the disadvantaged and those who are not included.

However, when there is no standard for good leadership that is commonly accepted, and when no participatory process of selecting representatives/leadership has been established, the chances of these leaders' commitments to create an inclusive society is almost dismal. In such a case, there is a detachment between leaders and members of the communities/societies, which creates a condition where the majority feel excluded from major decision-making processes. It was also pointed out that an unwillingness of those in power to include the disadvantaged and marginalized in the decision-making processes will result in further exclusion and marginalization of those groups.

Poverty - socio-economic disparity between the rich and the poor:

Poverty remains as an obstacle to social inclusion. Typically, the poor have not only few economic resources, but also very little opportunity for meaningful participation in and access to social or political life. Due to a lack of education, information, time and energy, or a lack of an awareness of their rights to contribute to major policies, the poor generally are excluded from decision-making processes. Not only are they being excluded, but they are also vulnerable to manipulation in advancement of political agendas.

Education systems that are not inclusive:

Education can play a key role in transforming societies and overcoming various divisional lines - whether they are social, economic, religious, etc. As such, education systems must be both impetuses for and a reflection of inclusion. In order for social inclusion to be possible, there is a need for fair and accountable representation/leadership, and only through good and inclusive education, can societies raise leaders who hold high moral standards, keen social understandings, and profound knowledge. It was also pointed out that a system of teacher-centered education can lead to a lack of inclusion, as it is a one-way flow of knowledge, and does not take into account the experiences of students as important learning.

Lack of access to public information

In order to educate or inform citizens to create a sense of inclusion and acceptance, there must be widespread information dissemination and a free flow of knowledge within the society. Lack of timely access to accurate information often leads to doubts, suspicion, inflammatory statements, accusations, and ultimately, exclusion and conflict. While media can play a critical role in disseminating the information, knowledge and messages (i.e., awareness-raising campaigns on de-stigmatizing people living with HIV/AIDS), the media is sometimes also responsible for perpetuating social values and standards that exclude or discriminate against certain individuals (stereotyping).

Mindset of people

People tend to be reluctant for change, especially those who have been enjoying their privileges. Classification, categorization and/or stereotyping (based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, social or economic status), once formulated in one's mind, take roots over time and limit one's perspective. This classification of nations, community areas or people within a particular group has the instant effect of exclusion, as typically, the standards are set by those who exclude others. Practices of hierarchy, whether in government, education, regions, or nations, can be an obstacle to social inclusion, when those on top of the hierarchy perpetuate a framework of exclusion by actively creating parameters that set them apart from those below them.

The issues of disempowerment, “learnt hopelessness” and identity preservation were also pointed out. Identity preservation may be important for groups that choose to self-exclude in order to maintain their identity. However, this does not discount the need to make opportunities available even for such groups. There is also the question of agency. Who defines the terms for inclusion? How much inclusion is desirable?

Lack of knowledge, lack of know-how/capacity:

A lack of knowledge, a lack of social understanding and a lack of moral understanding by the majority about those who are disadvantaged, excluded, and marginalized was pointed out as an obstacle to social cohesion. If a person is literate, it is difficult for him or her to understand how to include those who are illiterate, and vice versa. Mutual learning is therefore important.

Structural discrimination:

Structures in society, the way they are built, the alternatives they fail to provide, the constraints and challenges they pose for other inhabitants in the society, are all obstacles to an inclusive society. In a society where there are no schools for the blind, physical therapist centers, alternative options in provision for the physically challenged, public centers, charity homes and programs to cater to orphans, outcasts, the mentally deranged, etc., the sense and desire for one to feel like a part of that society are less visible.

Lack of communication:

Good communication is a vital medium for an inclusive society. Common language is indeed an undefeatable force which binds people together. Without a commonly identified means of verbal communication, inhabitants may feel excluded from other groups within the society, leading them to retreat into family/kinsman groups with whom they can better communicate. Taking it further, even if common language exists, people may apply different meanings to the same words, phrases and expressions. Therefore, it is important to create a shared understanding of what is meant by a collection of phrases and expressions used with specific intentions, such as creating an inclusive society. Spatial distance (physical distance, i.e., rural/urban, remote regions, but also those who do not have access to means of communication ICTs (Information Communication Technologies)) is also an obstacle for better communication.

Insecurity:

Security is a pre-condition for an inclusive society. In the absence of physical and psychological security, people become defensive, and put their personal interests first and utmost (i.e., migration in search of safety and greater security). Priority should be given to provide safety and security with members of the society, so as to provide a basis for making social inclusion possible.

Inequitable distribution of natural and economic resources:

Populations that exceed the natural resources to support themselves will tend to fight for the survival of their kin group and ignore any claims of "others" for a share of scarce resources. An equal distribution of natural and economic resources underlines the cohesion of a society and reinforces the notion that every citizen should feel included.

Lack of Recognition/Evidence/Impact:

People stop participating and feel excluded if their contributions, efforts or services are not recognized; or if they do not receive any feedback from or see any impact of their inputs. Many people, especially those who are excluded/marginalized, choose to remain silent and deny existing problems, rather than facing and addressing them. Without positive feedback, people cease to commit themselves to maintain the well-being of their societies, and eventually stop feeling as though they are a part of it. Therefore, failure to recognize people's positive actions is an obstacle to an inclusive society.

Possible actions to be taken to tackle these challenges:

- Encourage and enable open dialogue, involving excluded groups.
- Attempt to learn and understand different cultures, values, and perspectives of various social groups as a method towards creating unity while managing diversity.
- Reduce the socio-economic disparity among the rich and the poor.
- Use education and capacity building to foster an understanding of good governance and effective leadership, and also to enhance the capacity of local governments (i.e., provide training on participation process and tools to help them incorporate inclusivity in planning and implementing their projects and programs).

- Set clear and targeted goals, with the appropriate strategies to achieve those goals, in implementing policies that will further social inclusion
- Articulate inclusive policies relating to all citizens, in particular, the minority and vulnerable groups---these inclusive policies will cover all areas, including housing, employment, and planning.
- Use indicators or benchmarks on an inclusivity index--benchmarking to be conducted on a regular basis to test the effectiveness of the inclusive policies and strategies.
- Advocate for an effective use of the media, and effective partnerships with policy makers to put force the social inclusion agenda. Also support corporate bodies to meet their social responsibility goals.
- Create knowledge-base: disseminating knowledge and raising awareness of each citizen's right to decide (and to create possibilities for making better use of these rights) is the best way to promote social integration.

3. Measuring Social Integration:

In measuring social inclusion, the following two goals were proposed: 1) to assess the impacts of efforts undertaken to promote or enhance social inclusion, and 2) to facilitate comparisons within and across communities, societies, etc.

Inclusiveness, cohesiveness, civic participation, safety and security were among the elements that need to be examined. Equality was considered to be difficult to use as an indicator, as there is a difference/ discrepancy between, "equality of opportunity" and "equality of outcome", also between "de jure" equality and "de facto" equality.

One of the major challenges in using indicators to examine social inclusion is the question of relevance. Universal indicators may be desirable as they allow for comparative analysis. At the same time, in order to gain meaningful results, indicators should be developed, desirably in a participatory manner, to capture elements that have specific relevance to the members of a certain society, and as such, they cannot be applied universally. Ideally, the indicators will have both universal applicability and specific contextual relevance.

One approach for measuring inclusion is to use indicators that measure participation or lack of participation in the social, political, and economic domains. It would be useful to identify indicators that could be applied for "conflict prevention" and "peacebuilding", based on the indicators that would measure social inclusion/cohesion.

Relevant Case Studies on Social Integration:

Building a Picture of Community Cohesion

"Building a Picture of Community Cohesion", by the UK Community Cohesion Unit. It addresses both relational issues and structural issues (such as unemployment, etc.). (See below for the extracts)

- All local agencies need a detailed understanding of the nature of the communities they serve in order to assess how well equipped they are to build community cohesion.
- Community cohesion is important to the success of strategies and initiatives which aim to improve the quality of people's life.
- This booklet sets out a list of 10 indicators that can be used by local authorities and their partners to help build a picture of community cohesion in their area. They should help to provide a baseline assessment and a means of monitoring progress towards a better understanding of the local context.
- Many local stakeholders are working hard to develop local strategies to help improve the quality of life and the opportunities available to their communities. Community cohesion needs to be reflected in all of these strategies – the community strategy, neighborhood renewal strategy and policing and housing strategies. Measuring community cohesion locally will in the long term make it easier to assess the effectiveness of these plans.
- Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- A cohesive community is one where:
 - There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities.
 - The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued.
 - Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.
 - Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighborhoods.
- Indicators used to measure community cohesion need to be interpreted in the light of local knowledge and should be seen as a basis for discussion, not simply regarded as a measure of performance of a local authority or local partners.

The indicators outlined below have been divided into five themes. The first relates to a headline outcome, while the others relate to the definition of community cohesion.

Headline Outcome:

1. The percentage of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together.

Common Vision and Sense of Belonging

2. The percentage of respondents who feel that they belong to their neighborhood/local area/county.
3. Key priorities for improving an area.
4. The percentage of adults surveyed who felt that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

The Diversity of Peoples' Backgrounds and Circumstances are Appreciated and Positively Valued

5. The percentage of people who feel that local ethnic differences are respected.
6. Number of racial incidents recorded by police authorities per 100,000.

Those from Different Ethnic Backgrounds Have Similar Life Opportunities

7. Local concentration of deprivation
8. The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at Grades A*-C or equivalent.
9. The percentage of unemployed people claiming benefit who have been out of work for more than a year.

Strong and Positive Relationships are Being Developed between People from Different Backgrounds in the Workplace, Schools and Neighborhood

10. The percentage of people from different backgrounds who mix with other people from different backgrounds in everyday situations.

National Human Development Report 2007 - Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina

"2007 National Human Development Report on Social Inclusion in Bosnia Herzegovina," by the United Nations Development Program. This report attempts to develop a social exclusion index, which is based on a number of indicators within the categories of living standards, health, education, participation in society and access to services. (See below for the extracts)

- This report analyses the different facets and causes of social exclusion in BiH (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and provides recommendations for promoting social inclusion.
- The concept of social inclusion, which is at the heart of EU social policy-making, is very much congruent with both the human development and the human rights-based approaches to socio-economic development.
- These approaches draw upon economic and social rights analyses and take into account all entitlements relevant for enlarging the choices of individuals to live a decent and meaningful life.

- In addition, they share a common concern about equity, non-discrimination and inclusive participation.
- The analysis of the quality of life in BiH has yielded some paradoxical results:
 - The economy continues to grow, and education and health outcomes show ongoing improvement. Thus, in aggregate human development terms, BiH is progressing well – so much so that on average it now ranks among those countries in the world with the highest human development status.
 - Yet social exclusion remains a pressing problem and underlying this aggregate progress is a series of social fractures, and a generic increase in inequalities of income, educational; and health outcomes. Our summary statistic, the social exclusion index, suggests that over 50% of the population is socially excluded in some way. Furthermore, 22% of the populace experiences some form of extreme exclusion and 47% are at risk of long-term social exclusion.
- This report argues that the country's social policy must incorporate the social inclusion perspective, and defines a policy agenda for strengthening social inclusion in BiH.
- Recommendations include:
 - inclusive economic development strategies such as the utilization of active labor market policies and anti-discrimination initiatives to accelerate the employment of excluded groups and women;
 - strengthening quality education to prevent poverty, inequality and joblessness;
 - securing equity and inclusion in healthcare;
 - crafting an inclusive social policy and social welfare system; and
 - encouraging a fully participatory democracy.
- In general terms, being excluded is understood as being left outside the mainstream and denied access to the social, economic and political rights afforded to others. Social exclusion draws not only on economic and social rights but is related to all entitlements relevant for enlarging the choices of individuals to live a decent and meaningful life.
- A social exclusion perspective shares with a rights-based approach a common concern with equity, non-discrimination and the importance of participation that should be inclusive. In this respect, a social exclusion perspective is concerned with governance and citizenship rights, with the institutional dimension of exclusion and with the organizations, institutions and processes that exclude.

- The extent and nature of social exclusion in BiH can be analyzed in the following categories: post-conflict discrimination and ethnic separation, economic insecurity and vulnerability, education, health, social protection and civic participation. The gender aspects of exclusion can also be examined within each of these segments.
- To provide a general barometer of exclusion in BiH, the NDHR 2007 researchers developed a methodology for calculating a series of three social inclusion indices. These draw on the approach used to track changes in human development, but specifically address isolation from key economic, political and social processes.
 - **The General Social Exclusion Index** is based on seven proxy indicators reflecting living standards, health, education, participation in society and access to services. The index suggests that 50.32% of BiH population is socially excluded in at least one of these forms
 - **The Extreme Social Exclusion Index** is a stronger form of the General Index and is estimated at 21.85%. This signifies that approximately 22% of BiH's population is extremely socially excluded from the most basic processes and needs.
 - **The Long-term Social Exclusion Index** differs from the others in that it measures that sector of the population which has limited choices for improving their situation, thus being at risk of long-term exclusion. This index shows that 47% of the BiH population is at risk of long-term exclusion.
- A socially inclusive policy agenda will ensure an equitable and fair transition process that will contribute to future conflict prevention in a manner consistent with EU integration process requirements.
- Only by sharing a common vision on social inclusion can the quality of life of every citizen be improved and a lasting and genuinely inclusive society be created for tomorrow's BiH.

Poverty and Exclusion in a Globalised World (A.S. Bhalla and Frederic Lapeyre, 1999.)

This volume looks at the three dimensions of social exclusion: economic, social and political. Exclusion is analyzed as a new approach to such issues as the "new" poverty, precariousness, long-term unemployment, social polarization and lack of citizenship. The book shows how relational and distributional aspects of poverty are interlinked.

4. Existing Indicators:

- **Quality of life indicators – objective and subjective, quantitative and qualitative.**

The Calvert-Henderson Quality of Life Indicators are a contribution to the worldwide

effort to develop comprehensive statistics of national well-being that go beyond traditional macroeconomic indicators. A systems approach is used to illustrate the dynamic state of our social, economic and environmental quality of life. The dimensions of life examined include: education, employment, energy, environment, health, human rights, income, infrastructure, national security, public safety, re-creation and shelter. (<http://www.calvert-henderson.com/>)

“Considering Social Cohesion in Quality of Life Assessments: Concept and Measurement” in *Assessing Quality of Life and Living Conditions to Guide National Policy*. 2002, Springer Netherlands. In recent years, the concept of social cohesion has received great attention in scientific research as well as in politics. It represents a central policy goal at the national and the supranational level as declared for example by many policy documents of the European Union. The present paper integrates social cohesion into the components of quality of life and distinguishes two essential goal dimensions inherent in the concept: the inequality dimension and the social capital dimension. The first dimension incorporates the goals of reducing disparities, promoting equal opportunities and combating social exclusion, while the second dimension deals with all aspects aiming at strengthening social relations, interactions and ties. A proposal is made on how to measure this conceptualization of social cohesion within the framework of a European System of Social Indicators, and some examples of indicators of social cohesion in Europe are discussed. (<http://www.springerlink.com/home/main.mpx>)

Audit Commission (UK) - The Commission consulted on a set of voluntary quality of life indicators for local authorities during autumn 2000. The exercise was prompted by the new powers given to local authorities in the Local Government Act 2000 to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area, and their new duty to work with partners to prepare a community strategy. Most respondents agreed that indicators covering these areas would be helpful to local authorities, although there were comments about the individual indicators. Quality of life indicators are different from the statutory best value performance indicators (BVPIs). However it is worth noting that some of the BVPIs already cover sustainable development and quality of life issues - for example recycling levels and educational achievement, and authorities may wish to include them in their community strategies. The quality of life indicators are a completely voluntary undertaking and are intended to be complementary to the best value indicators. (<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/>)

- **Self-experience/mood indicators (at the population level)** – depression, anxiety, hopelessness, stress management, etc. Public Health and Public Mental Health communities have great experience with creating and refining indicators that measure these qualitative notions that concern an individual’s personal emotions and feelings, which in turn reflect upon the state of many different social structures (social inequality, racism, economic segregation, limited access to resources for certain groups, etc.). These emotions are in great part indicators of a person’s “quality of life,” and therefore should also be considered when measuring social inclusion, alongside economic distribution, education, and all of the other quantitative indicators that exist for measuring quality of life.

- **Community functionality or participation** – These can be measured at the nominal level within three dimensions: economic, political, and social. A social inclusion index forming an

overall measure of social inclusion is created from these items.

The economic dimension consists of 10 items on respondent's economic situation, it is captured by two categories of questions assessing respondent's ability to afford basic needs, e.g., housing, food, and clothing, etc., 3 items; and ability to make ends meet, 7 items (theoretical range is 0 to 10).

Variables on the political dimension assess political participation. They includes 3 items asking the respondent whether she/he has voted in an election, called or written to a public official, and supported a candidate for public office (theoretical range is 0 to 3).

Sixteen items assess social participation: community involvement, e.g., respondent's involvement in her and her relationship with members of her community. This measure has a theoretical range of 0 to 16. In line with the analytical criteria used, a dummy coded variable will be created for each dimension of participation to allow for comparison. Hence, each item on these dimensions is coded as 0, indicating non participation in a given dimension and 1, indicating participation. An overall measure of social inclusion (theoretical range 0-29) is created from items on each of the three dimensions.

Despite headways made in this direction, it is important to acknowledge that this work is still at an early stage in its development; therefore, it is not conclusive. Perhaps, more suitable indicators will emerge as the work progresses. Also, these indicators need not be universally applicable; they may be modified to reflect factors prevailing in a given context. In addition, scholars have suggested the need to incorporate this work with the qualitative research. The argument presented is that this has the benefit of enabling the investigators capture the process(es) of social exclusion/inclusion, which is shaped by the subjective perceptions of the agent/s (Askonas, 2000; Room, 1999).

Other examples of Indicators:

*** Freedom House Index**

One example of an index partially related to social integration topics was developed by Freedom House. It measures freedom according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. The survey does not rate Governments or government performance per se, but rather the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals. The Freedom House Index covers a range of aspects, some of which are particularly relevant for measuring the justice component of social integration, for example:

- Political pluralism and participation: 1. Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system open to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings? 2. Is there a significant opposition vote, de facto opposition power, and a realistic possibility for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 3. Are the people's political choices free from domination by the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchies, or any other powerful group? 4. Do cultural, ethnic, religious, and other minority groups enjoy reasonable self-determination, self-government, autonomy, or participation through informal consensus in the decision-making

process?

- Associational and organizational rights: 1. Is there freedom of assembly, and of demonstration, and open public discussion? 2. Is there freedom of political or quasi-political organization? (note: this includes political parties, civic organizations, ad hoc issue groups, etc.) 3. Are there free trade unions and peasant organizations or the equivalent, and is there effective collective bargaining? Are there free professional and other private organizations?

- Personal autonomy and individual rights: 1. Is there personal autonomy? Does the State control travel, choice of residence or choice of employment? Is there freedom from indoctrination and from excessive dependency on the State?

2. Do citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses? Is private business activity unduly influenced by government officials, the security forces or organized crime? 3. Are there personal social freedoms, including gender equality, and choice in respect of marriage partners, and size of family? 4. Is there equality of opportunity and the absence of economic exploitation?

See www.freedomhouse.org

**** Boston Indicators Project**

The Boston Indicators Project provides an excellent example of how to measure social inclusion. Indicators include, for example:

- Civic health: racial and ethnic diversity; opportunities for civic discourse
- Social capital: trust in one's neighbors; civic engagement and social and racial trust; volunteer activity
- Representative leadership: corporate leadership by race and gender; diversity of elected leadership by race and gender
- Voter participation: registered voters; participation rates; number of contested elections
- Healthy race and community relations: reported hate crimes; residential segregation
- Stability and investment in neighborhoods: people living at the same address by number of years and by neighborhood; small business loans by neighborhood
- Welcoming and inclusive environment: public building and amenities accessible to people with disabilities; multilingual capacity in public institutions
- Access to information: library books in circulation by neighborhood; community newspapers by neighborhood and linguistic group
- Strength of the non-profit sector: non-profits by budget and type; revenues for the largest non-profits
- Public support and philanthropy: grants; public support from all sources; assets and grants of foundations; cultural sector funding
- Other indicators include the situation of the arts and their impact; expressions of cultural diversity; arts education; cultural participation; funding for the arts

See www.tbf.org/indicators2004/civichealth/index.asp?id=2244

***** Sustainable Seattle**

One of the most comprehensive measurements of participation are the indicators developed in the context of the Sustainable Seattle project. They include indicators relating to:

environment; population and resources; economy; youth and education; and health and community. These indicators are particularly interesting because they have been developed in a participatory manner. Through this process, people agreed on indicators that were meaningful to them, easy to apprehend, and easy to track. For example, people agreed to use the visibility of surrounding mountains from the city centre as an indicator of air quality -in addition to chemical measurements that people understood but found more difficult to "make sense of". Immediate feedback on progress or on emerging problems helped the community and its institutions promote sustainable development in Seattle.

Dimension	Domain	Indicator
Socio-demographics	Household	Gender Age Marital status Number of children
Economic	Financial	Total household income Sources of income Main source of income Household income trends Income poverty
	Labor market	Labor market status Access to labor market Long-term unemployment Precariousness of employment Casualization and job insecurity
Political	Individual	Personal insecurity Lack of political participation Lack of freedom of expression Equality of opportunity Disempowerment
	Community	Rule of law Low voter registration Low voter turnout Lack of confidence in political Process Social disturbance/disorder

Social	Basic needs/ Consumption	Access to basic needs and amenities Ability to afford to afford basic necessities
	Housing	Quality of housing stock Tenure Homelessness Perceived risk of crime

Summary of Participants' Feedback

Technical Difficulties:

Participants reported difficulties that were encountered, in reference to the electronic medium used to host the discussion. Some participants were inexplicably dropped from the forum, and therefore unable to participate. Others reported confusion and complexity when attempting to read or post messages to the discussion board. It was found that web-posting was less user-friendly and more cumbersome than reading and replying to comments distributed via mass email. In the future, efforts should be made to increase the ease and clarity of the message board, as well as continue with the supplementary method of sending messages to all participants via email.

Suggestions for Future E-dialogues:

Proposed Themes/Topics:

Participants proposed shifting the debate from the qualitative notions of the definitions of “social inclusion” and other related topics, to the specific tools, needed to create and maintain an inclusive society: how to measure inclusivity, develop indicators, share experiences, etc. It was suggested that these tools could later be used by cities and communities as resources for local city planners and researchers.

Future Invitees:

It was noted that participants in future E-dialogues should represent a cross-section of views, thereby inviting diverse opinions and varied resources from which to draw on in the discussion. It was suggested that there should be some mapping of target respondents before the beginning of the E-dialogue in a “pre-planning” stage, in order to best match the aims of the E-dialogue with the backgrounds of the various participants.

Duration and Facilitation of the Discussion:

Finally, participants, especially those who wish to contribute to the discussion, should be reminded to add comments that are short, sharp and focused, thereby creating a back-and-forth commentary that allows enough time for participants to

read, reflect upon, and then comment on the contributions of others, yet moves quickly enough to keep everyone engaged and interested.