

Expert Group Meeting on Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration

Paris, France
10 – 13 September 2007

Recommendations

These recommendations are the outcome of the Expert Group meeting, organized by the UNDESA in collaboration with UNESCO and UN-HABITAT at the UNESCO HQs in Paris from 10 to 13 September 2007, which are to be considered as a first step towards a better conceptualization, analysis and operationalisation of “social inclusion”. The recommendations are divided into: a) general recommendations; b) specific policy recommendations at national and sub-national levels; c) specific recommendations on measuring social inclusion; d) recommendations for fragile or post-conflict societies; and e) concrete recommendations for follow-up to this Expert Group Meeting.

I. General Recommendations

I-1. Essential elements necessary for creating an inclusive society:

The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995) defines an inclusive society as a society for all, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. An inclusive society is based on the fundamental values of equity, equality, social justice, and human dignity and rights and freedoms, as well as on the principles of embracing diversity. A society for all is equipped with appropriate mechanisms that enable its citizens to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, and ultimately shape their common future.

But what makes some societies more inclusive than others? What elements are considered as a key to effectively move towards a more inclusive society? The following elements were identified by the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) as critical for creating an inclusive society:

- Respect for the rule of law and the presence of strong legal infrastructure, including impartial, accountable judiciary;
- Respect for the rights, dignity and privileges of all individuals in society, espousing and ensuring their responsibilities;
- Inclusive policies, institutions and programmes that are pro-poor and gender sensitive, at national and sub-national levels;
- Equal opportunities for active participation in civic, social, cultural, economic, and political activities, especially inclusion of grassroots women’s organizations;
- Presence of strong civil society (civil rights, civic responsibility, civic engagement, citizenship and mutual trust);
- Equal access to public information, public infrastructures and facilities;
- Free, compulsory, functional and qualitative 'basic' education to empower the marginalized and the excluded;
- Cultural pluralism, respect for and appreciation of diversity;
- Existence of (or creating of) open space and multiple opportunities for participation to build shared common goals/visions. There is a need for continuous dialogue on positive

images of an inclusive society of the future in a participatory manner, which will be shared and understood by all individuals in society;

- Good governance and representative leadership to achieve transparency and accountability;
- Equitable distribution of economic and social resources;
- Effective urban management through furthering the decentralization process to local and community levels, and involving communities and their members.

I-2. Dimension of inclusion

Social inclusion is multi-dimensional, and should be approached from various angles. The following five dimensions of inclusion may be considered as incremental steps to social inclusion. Each of these five categories can also be approached in terms of both “process” and “content”. Starting from low to high, these 5 steps are as follows:

1. **Visibility:** to be noticed; to be recognized
2. **Consideration:** one’s concerns and needs are taken into account by policy makers
3. **Access to social interactions**
4. **Rights:** rights to act and claim (including the right to be different, “identity”), right to access quality and accessible social services (housing, education, transport, healthcare, etc.), right to work, right to participate in the cultural life
5. **Resources to fully participate in society:** social and financial resources are key; other important aspects also need to be taken into account in the possibility to fully participate, such as time, energy, spatial distance... (the reasons why people cannot participate in society need to be explored further)

Social inclusion is a process aimed at lowering economic, social and cultural boundaries, or making boundaries more permeable. It is a dynamic phenomenon, as its boundaries are changing over time, space, and in quality. Minimum requirements to enable participation in the past are different today owing to technological advance (ICTs, mass media, mass transportation, etc). Social participation may have different meaning from one society to another.

Structural dimensions of inclusion – its process, framework, and interaction aspects- need to be looked at carefully. In this context, the following elements are worth further examination.

Inequality is something that is produced and can be changed. There is a difference between equality in opportunity/access and equality in results. Also, one needs to distinguish ‘inequality’ from being different. While we can be different, we all need to be provided with equal opportunity/access.

Cost of inclusion is high, but cost of exclusion and missed/lost opportunity is even higher (i.e. social conflict, violence, divided societies, etc.). Cost of inclusion also includes social costs, and should not be approached only through economic costs.

Inclusion is key for sustainable development.

Identity: to be different, desire to be the same, multiple identity, etc.

Insecurity (jobs, health, children at school, fear of crime – lack of trust) and enculturation of insecurity (feelings, experiences, perspectives of insecurity). Insecurity and fear generate more exclusion.

Fear (fear of unknown, fear for uncertainty). How to lower threshold of fear is one of the most difficult questions. Process and reproduction of fear, deep historical trauma, should be looked at. It is not enough to empower the excluded to participate, but empowering the majority to reduce their threshold of fear is equally important.

Individual versus groups/community: Collectivities (not only individual rights). The relationship between individual and groups needs to be approached with considerable amount of tact

Sense of responsibility (citizen's rights and responsibilities) is crucial in multicultural societies and changing one's lifestyles. What are the responsibilities of individual citizens, as members of a society, in increasing the participation of all members of their society?

Sense of community in bringing these people together

Culture of competition (where one wins and the others lose): there is a need to shift from win/lose competition to win/win logic.

I-3. Obstacles for social inclusion

Obstacles for social inclusion (including actual and perceived inequality, intergenerational poverty, physical and psychological insecurity...) often result from inequitable distribution of socio-economic resources, unintended or intended exclusionary policies, lack of access to information and participation, natural or man-made disasters, including violent conflict, lack of inclusive democracy and good governance, etc.

Contrary to a widely shared view in the globalization discourse, economic constraints to redress inequality or social exclusion are not very robust. In fact, many countries that achieve relatively equal societies demonstrate stronger economic competitiveness. It is rather a political will to reduce barriers to social inclusion. If this is in fact the case, the cost for social inclusion should be seen as a long-term investment for sustainable development. The cost-benefit analysis for inequality/equality and exclusion/inclusion should be further examined, and the cost consciousness of the adversary effect of socio-economic exclusion be further advocated.

II. Specific policy recommendations at national and sub-national level

II-1. Actions to be taken to reduce obstacles for social inclusion

In order to reduce obstacles for social inclusion and promote respect for human dignity, the following actions were proposed:

- Set clear and targeted social inclusion, cohesion and wellbeing goals, with the appropriate strategies to achieve these goals, including in the implementation of policies that will further social inclusion. Suggested policy goals include:
 - Promote social inclusion, social cohesion;
 - Promote gender equality;
 - Ensure equal opportunity for all, including within the labor market;
 - Promote equal access to basic quality social services (education, health, transport, shelter, etc.);
 - Ensure access for all to the resources (including land), rights and services, that are necessary for a true participation in society;
 - Prevent and address social exclusion, and eliminate all forms of discrimination;
 - Recognize the dignity and respect for each and every individual regardless of their background, as a moral and legal principle/instrument;
 - Overcome spatial components of exclusion (e.g. land policy);
 - Create safety and sense of security; and

- Establish wellbeing of people as a policy objective.

In order to achieve the above policy goals, there is a need to strengthen capacities and develop tools in the following areas:

- Formulate social inclusion policies that are adequate, accessible, financially sustainable, adaptable and efficient;
- Provide support to and strengthen capacities of institutions that are working on justice and social inclusion;
- Enhance access to knowledge and information (including ICTs);
- Empower people to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies, as well as in the planning, budgeting, and resource mobilization (including civil society, the private sector, academia, various social groups);
- Invest in social capital - building trust amongst people and between institutions;
- Invest in and enhance capacities of key social welfare institutions that can create effective linkages between existing sectoral indicators and expertise with inclusive goals (For example, public health and public mental health infrastructures and their use of, and responses to, measures implicated in inclusion/exclusion such as wellbeing and social trust through population-level interventions);
- Build effective partnerships, recognizing the complementary responsibilities of different sectors within society, within and between (sub-)national governments, as well as the need for an increased cooperation between United Nations entities and other international institutions;
- Create an open space for dialogue to explore policy options, common values and identity, bringing communities together, and ensuring that the excluded and marginalized are heard;
- Build capacity in good governance, accountability and transparency at national and sub-national levels;
- Strengthen statistical capacity for data collection and better analysis and better use of data at national and sub-national levels; and
- Mobilization and mobility.

II-2. Mechanisms or processes most productive in creating and sustaining an inclusive society

- Articulate the concept of social inclusion as a foundation for inclusive policies, which affect all citizens' lives, in particular those of the minority and vulnerable groups.
 - Clearly state the right/opportunity to be different while also being included and actively participate in processes, spaces, and institutions.
 - Differentiate the concept of “social inclusion” from merely “reducing disparity among people”, which were common indicators in the past. Social inclusion is a much wider concept, incorporating distinctive and relevant dimensions such as: alienation; social mobility; access to space; sense of ownership; trust among people and institutions, being part of society; and wellbeing of individuals. Social inclusion indicators should go beyond traditional disparity indicators, and should not rely on a single indicator alone.
 - As such, the following components should be further explored and considered to be an integral part of social inclusion:

- Social capital: linking the relationship between the state, government and public services, and citizens, focusing on the interface
 - Overcome spatial components of exclusion (e.g. land policy)
 - Social mobility: effective public transportation system, walk-ways to increase access for marginalized communities to social and economic life, including labor market
 - Mobilization:
 - Wellbeing: capture how people experience their lives (how people think and feel about their lives). Try to integrate a subjective and cognitive/affective component into the concept of social inclusion, which is currently absent. This will include the use of measures already developed in this area that can link with existing capacities such as community mental health networks.
 - Open Space for everyone to engage in dialogues and exchanges (i.e., Porto Alegre, Observatory in the City Hall)
- Mainstream the objectives of social inclusion into existing policies and programmes in all areas, including regulatory framework, governance, economic planning, education, health, housing, employment, and urban planning, etc.
 - Demonstrate commitment to “inclusion-driven” policy-making measures, through prioritizing social inclusion dimension, better described as “Convivencia/ Interconnectedness/Ubuntu”, or “sense and feeling of belonging”, in rectifying existing economic and social disparities and policy priorities. This “Convivencia/ Interconnectedness/ Ubuntu” dimension is to be considered as an overarching goal for people’s aspiration and, at the same time, it needs to be incorporated into all policies and programmes in other key areas. Specific actions to be taken include:
 - Formulate policies that promote a sense of belonging
 - Redefine collective pride and identity in an inclusive and participatory manner
 - Define a shared future with accommodating diversity
 - Create a mechanism for envisioning processes at local, regional and national levels.
 - Develop resilient and accessible dispute resolution mechanisms such as, facilitation, consultation, participatory dialogue, public hearing to enable reasonable accommodations of different views, values and cultures, etc.
 - Invest in measuring strategies that capture this dimension

Such strategies should have actionable responses that prioritize the connections between the “Convivencia/Interconnectedness/Ubuntu” dimension and other disparities and policy priorities

- Identify indicators on inclusiveness of a society, and monitor the effectiveness of the inclusive policies and strategies. It is important to use a multi-method approach that uses qualitative approaches in addition to quantitative ones, to provide explanation for the findings.
- Advocate through effective use of the media, and effective partnerships with policy makers, civil societies, and the private sector to put into force the social inclusion agenda. Also support corporate bodies to meet their social responsibility goals.

III. Specific recommendations on measuring social inclusion

III-1. Possible approaches to capture, analyze and measure the multiple dimensions of social inclusion/cohesion

- A comprehensive review of existing methods used to explore social inclusion and cohesion is required (i.e. EU social indicators and open method of coordination). The same should be done for existing interventions aimed at creating a socially inclusive society. Based on such a comprehensive research, a draft framework may be developed, tested, and revised, which will enhance our understanding of social inclusion/integration, and lead us to prioritize actions to be taken on the basis of solid, empirically confirmed knowledge. More effort should be made to explore what other countries have done to address social inclusion/cohesion/integration. (i.e., EU country's social inclusion strategies, UK Equalities Review).
- Social inclusion/integration discourses need to give greater consideration for how people think and feel (their experiences and perceptions), including the role that people's aspirations and goals have in shaping behavior and action. Wellbeing concepts and methodologies could inform such an approach.
- Because social inclusion/integration is a multi-dimensional concept/phenomenon, there is a need for a **multi-method approach** to understand it, and measure it. This requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, drawing from a range of disciplines. Qualitative methods are important for unpacking the processes behind the figures/numbers. A multi-method approach would help overcome the universal/national/sub-national tension in exploring a complex phenomenon such as social inclusion/integration.
- Attempts to measure social inclusion need to capture both process and content. Indicators and measures are important and useful, but this should not replace in-depth research that is necessary to explain the results of measures. The Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) methodology provides useful lessons of how to do this, particularly the importance of a multi-method approach (<http://www.welldev.org.uk/>).¹
- The use of such measures in research can incorporate studies at national, regional, local and individual levels, and can encompass various methodological approaches, such as case studies, multiple comparative case studies, comparative surveys (at international, national, regional and local levels), in-depth interviews of individual citizens, and demonstration research...
- Wellbeing and functional mental health² measures and indicators could usefully be taken into account when exploring social inclusion/integration. Wellbeing measures and methods provide a way to measure and understand people's perceptions and experiences. Many can be implemented through extension of existing principles and capacities for community mental health work. Social inclusion/integration is people-centered; therefore there is a need to consult people on their values, beliefs, attitudes etc. A range of measures are

¹ For a thorough discussion on the type of tools and analysis which can help better assess the link between policies and expected resulting social outcomes, see: Marlier, Atkinson, Cantillon and Nolan, *The EU and social inclusion: Facing the challenges*, The Policy Press, Bristol: 2007.

² Functional mental health here means: the levels of mental health distress or disability that impairs function (i.e. meeting social roles, occupational performance, self care or care for others) rather than just a measure of symptoms or reports of anxiety, distress, or fear, etc.)

already being used to explore how people think and feel, and how this affects people's functioning.

For example, the Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS) developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been measuring, monitoring and reporting the quality of life in the municipalities regularly since 1999³.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has also commissioned an important work in this field. Its "EurLIFE" interactive database on quality of life in Europe offers data drawn from the Foundation's own Quality of Life Surveys and from other published sources. The database provides information on the objective living conditions and subjective wellbeing of European citizens. It contains data from all 27 EU Member States as well as the EU candidate countries Croatia and Turkey⁴. The European Social Survey also provides useful information. It has included a rotating module on personal and social wellbeing to explore hedonic (feeling & evaluation) and eudaimonic wellbeing (capabilities & functioning⁵).

- The social inclusion indicators could attempt to measure inclusion by means of the five following dimensions: production, consumption, asset ownership, political and social activities, with indicators covering three broad categories: economic, political, and social. Items on each dimension are scored to create an index. Each index is then subjected to a factor analysis or Cronbach's alpha.
- Social inclusion indicators could be, instead of separately constructed or built, convergent with the existing valued institutions, and with an emphasis on the concept of "Ubuntu/interconnectedness/Convivencia". That would make social inclusion indicators more operational and actionable, as indicators would then fit in with the existing census process.
- Given all criteria necessary to consider and meet, it would be realistic to identify a small number of indicators. There are a few existing indicators that are concrete, actionable, and also bridge macro and micro level analysis. These include: wellbeing, social distance and trust and urban setting.

III-2. Process of developing social inclusion indicators

- Before identifying indicators, specifying the meaning of inclusion in different contexts may be necessary. In addition, in order to ensure consistency through key areas, it may be useful to identify common objectives, such as: promoting social cohesion, gender equality and equal opportunities for all; ensure the "inclusiveness" of policies through mainstreaming social inclusion objectives into all relevant public policies (including economic, budgetary and training policies). In this regard, the EU methodological framework for social indicators provides valuable experience and background which are already reflected in several of the recommendations made below (especially, the methodological framework for selecting comparative indicators).
- When selecting indicators, there is a need to balance contextual relevance and a degree of universalism, as universal indicators allow comparison, but irrelevant for specific situations. It is important to take a participatory approach, involving relevant stakeholders.

³ <http://www.fcm.ca/english/qol/qol.html>

⁴ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/qualityoflife/eurlife/index.php>

⁵ <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>

- It is more useful and practical to identify a few key indicators in all the main dimensions of social inclusion (see below for suggested areas), as large numbers of indicators may obscure the development of meaningful measures. Each of these dimensions should:
 - Be comprehensive, cover all key dimensions of the common objectives;
 - Balanced across the different dimensions; and
 - Enable a synthetic and transparent assessment of a situation in relation to the common objectives.

- When selecting individual indicators to be used in a comparative context, the following aspects need to be considered. If indicators selected are:
 - Relevant (capture essence of problem);
 - Timely;
 - Accessible (simple to understand and easy to collect);
 - Measurable;
 - Robust and valid;
 - Reliable (built on regularly available and timely data);
 - Comparable across cultures and sensitive to cultural diversity;
 - Responsive to policy interventions; and
 - Have a clear and accepted normative interpretation.

- It is also important to build in a high degree of local ownership of the measurement tools and results, from sub-national and national governments to civil society and the private sector, through participatory data collection processes. In some cases, this participatory process can be equally important in terms of promoting social inclusion.

- The indicators should help capture gaps and constraints in policy implementation; they also should contribute to identifying specific capacity-building needs, and formulating plans to change the situation.

- Suggested steps to guide the process of developing inclusion indicators are:
 - Allocate resources – effort driven by political will (local, regional, national and international levels);
 - Identify actors – through a process of consensus on who is involved in effort;
 - Create space where debate can take place;
 - Clarify meaning/definition of social inclusion both at the local/regional and national/global level
 - Establish criteria for monitoring and evaluation;
 - Build on existing indicators – establish guidelines to guide this effort;
 - Work with relevant stakeholders in participatory process – focus on local actors including civil society and vulnerable groups (ensures empowerment and local ownership);
 - Build on existing inclusion agendas;
 - Locate responsibility: UN agencies and partners; and
 - Develop guidelines, e.g., the Canadian booklet on “Coalition of Cities against Racism” could serve as guide to this effort.

III-3. Suggested Domains and Examples of Indicators:

FINANCIAL POVERTY (relative and absolute):

To illustrate socio-economic disparity between have and have-nots

- Income (not only salary, but all kinds and forms of income where appropriate; aim at a measure of total household income)
- Consumption (food and non-food items)
- Other indicators of living standards (i.e., deprivation, lack of resources, enforced lack of durables⁶, etc...)

SOCIAL MOBILITY

To assess the degree of access for marginalized communities to social and economic life

- Effective public transportation system

SOCIAL CAPITAL:

To assess how society is functioning, level of confidence in authorities and interpersonal trust is important. Measure different dimensions of social capital (linking, bridging and bonding) When linked to security and human rights, one may be able to measure social capital deficit.

Indicators:

- Interpersonal trust (social networks and support)
- Trust in institutions
- Corruption
- Cultural intolerance for violent behavior (number of violent deeds to vulnerable groups)
- Presence of condoned violence (Police/court/legal system not taking action)

HOUSING: (HABITAT, the World Bank)

- Homelessness (measure of people who have nothing at all)
- Access to quality and affordable housing
- Security of land tenure: ownership of land, ownership of property land title, protection from eviction from both land for residence and informal sector work

EDUCATION (UNESCO, UNICEF):

- Access to education – school enrolment and drop out rates
- Children below 12 who are excluded. (Ethnicity, gender, religion: strive for multi-ethnic mix)
- Child and adult literacy and numeracy rates across different social divisions
- Access to informal and continuous education

HEALTH: (UNICEF, WHO, many good indicators exist)

- Specific needs of vulnerable groups
- Access to health care
- Mortality rates (infant mortality and premature mortality),
- Life expectancy, healthy life expectancy
- Nutrition (infant with low birth weight)

RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

- Laws and regulations designed to promote inclusion
- Public safety and crime

LABOUR MARKET: (indicators need to be broken down for vulnerable groups)

- Unemployment, underemployment and joblessness

⁶ These important indicators are based on 2 questions. First, respondents are asked whether or not they possess or have access to a certain item. (i.e., a washing machine, a car for private use...). Then, if they respond negatively, they are asked whether it is because they cannot afford the item ("enforced lack") or whether it is by choice.

- Relation between formal and informal jobs / size of informal economy
- Labor market equity (respect for diversity, discrimination in the labor force)
- Gender integration in the workforce.

PARTICIPATION – covering social, economic and political dimensions.

- Voter turnout
- Civic engagement
- Access to information
- Access to public services

ENVIRONMENT

- Sustainable development policies
- Environmental protection measures
- Environmental inequality⁷

WELLBEING MEASURES: need to capture people's experiences (and how they think and feel), including mixture of hedonic and eudemonic wellbeing measures (Satisfaction with life scale and functional mental health measures) For example, see the European Social Survey⁸, and Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW)⁹. Measuring wellbeing also requires qualitative methods to explain processes behind the indicators.

Further analysis will be possible by cross examining the above with demographic and background information, such as:

DEMOGRAPHIC & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Socio-demographic profile (i.e., gender, age, religion, ethnicity, type of area <urban/suburban/rural>, marital status, occupation, level of highest education, disability, etc.)
- Household & Family Composition
- Identity (i.e., foreign born, new immigrants, indigenous population, minorities)
- Language spoken at home

⁷ http://www.sd-research.org.uk/researchreviews/documents/ESJ_final_report.pdf. Lucas, K. Walker, G. Eames, M. Fay, H. and Poustie, Justice: Rapid Research and Evidence Review. Environmental inequality refers to the unequal social distribution of environmental risks and hazards and access to environmental goods and services, and is closely related to the concept of environmental justice.

⁸ <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>. ESS's measurement of wellbeing and quality of life links the work of sociologists, psychologists and political scientists to that of economists, epidemiologists, demographers and others. For instance, links have been shown between survey measures of life satisfaction and national economic indicators, between self-rated health and morbidity statistics, and between declining trust in government and falling electoral turnouts. Arriving at an appropriate and achievable long-list of new indicators will thus require extensive scrutiny as well as detailed discussions and consultations with and between a diverse range of appropriate specialists in each of these disciplines.

⁹ www.atkinsonfoundation.ca. CIW attempts to measure wellbeing of citizens in seven areas. The Living Standards domain, for example, will measure incomes and jobs; the gap between rich and poor; food and livelihood security; and affordable housing. The Healthy Populations domain will assess the health status and health outcomes of different groups of Canadians, as well as risk factors and conditions that affect health and disease. The Community Vitality domain will assess social cohesion, personal security and safety, and people's sense of social and cultural belonging. Other domains will measure the quality of the environment, the educational attainment of the population, and the amount of free time that people can devote to social, family and cultural pursuits. Finally, the CIW will measure people's civic engagement, and how responsive governing bodies are to citizens' needs and views.

IV. Recommendations for fragile or post-conflict societies

IV-1. How does the concept of developing and sustaining social inclusion/cohesion apply in fragile or post-conflict societies and what special measure may be needed?

- Social integration/inclusion should be seen as an ultimate early prevention, by creating and maintaining peaceful social relations, and making societies more resilient for disintegration. It also lays a foundation to build an inclusive society in a post-conflict situation. As the social tensions arise, and societies start to become more polarized and fragmented, the window of opportunity for possible interventions is getting narrower and narrower. In this regard, social integration/inclusion should be seen as a condition to create a long-term sustainable peace, and prevent societies from slipping into violent conflict. Therefore, the cost for social integration/inclusion could be described as insurance fee or investment for the future.
- In addition to formulating new policies or strengthening institutions that promote social integration/inclusion, the concept of inclusion should be effectively mainstreamed into existing policies and programmes in different sectors. This requires a comprehensive review to identify if there are any policies or its implementation mechanisms that are unintentionally non-inclusive, or intentionally exclusive. This could be also done through, for example, a ‘situation analysis’ or a joint participatory dialogue.
- The concept of social integration/inclusion can also be incorporated in a range of general management and group process skills, such as active listening, meeting facilitation skills, confidence building, or more specific, targeted skills for collaborative, interest-based negotiations, participatory decision-making and leadership skills.
- It is also essential to build capacities of government officials and civil society on “conflict-sensitive” or “inclusive” development, particularly for post-conflict or fragile states. Governments need to provide enabling environment for civil society to recuperate and foster new leadership and flourish in post-conflict environments.
- Strategies for effective awareness-raising can be developed, in order to change mindsets of people. Such strategies could involve targeted mass media campaigns, and carefully crafted media messages, a series of facilitated dialogue sessions, or popularization of social integration/inclusion in local/regional languages.
- An approach for building national capacity for social inclusion needs to be context specific, however, at its inception, it could, ideally, build a carefully balanced set of predominantly **process capacity-building skills**, and gradually shifting to more content, once trust and respect are installed, relationships are built, fears are brought to the surface and shared, and content can be jointly addressed collaboratively.

V. Recommendations: A way forward – follow up actions to the Expert Group Meeting

The experts encouraged all parties to continue working in this area, and suggested the following activities to follow up the EGM.

1. Translate the concept of social integration/inclusion into practice, through formulating pilot studies in different regions, and highlight this issue in the programs of the related UN agencies and their collaboration scheme.
2. Advocacy on the importance of the concept of social inclusion/integration (popularize the concept in local/regional languages)
3. Mainstream “social inclusion” into other sectors – e.g., cross fertilization workshops to review the current approach.
4. Consolidate existing methodologies and indicators in such areas as social inclusion, social exclusion, social cohesion, wellbeing, mental health, community cohesion/solidarity, etc.
5. Conduct further research on existing work and good practices on social integration, social inclusion, social cohesion and social capital, and create a knowledge base to be shared widely.
6. Develop practical guidelines, for policy makers and practitioners, with a view to helping them to identify their own indicators, which emphasize citizen’s perceptions and experience, through applying a **multi-method approach** (using qualitative and quantitative approach). Compile manual on gathering data on social inclusion at the local/regional level (what and how to gather).
7. Put in place new modalities to strengthen dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and the civil society, including NGOs in the field of social inclusion.
8. Call upon new collaboration to further the goal of social integration/inclusion. Create synergies and linkages with related networks, such as regional and urban planners, peace-building/conflict prevention networks, international coalition of cities against racism and discrimination, and UNESCO’s Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme which is focusing on research-policy linkages, UN-HABITAT/UNESCO joint project on “Urban policies and the right to the city”, and UN-HABITAT’s work on “Inclusive cities”, DESA’s networks on youth, older persons, people with disabilities, family, indigenous peoples, etc.
9. Underscore the specificity of developing countries, particularly the role of structural institutions and institutional frameworks that allows actors in all spheres of society to engage harmoniously and to realize their respective potential, in realizing the objective of promoting inclusive cities.
10. Create an electronic resource based on theories and practices on social inclusion and related concepts.
11. Produce high quality publication based on this Expert Group meeting, which is relevant and useful to policy makers, researchers and practitioners.