

31 May - 01 June 2023

Bonn



## **POLICY-ORIENTED WORKSHOP**

# **STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES**



Social  
Cohesion  
Hub



**IDOS**

German Institute  
of Development  
and Sustainability

## Policy-oriented workshop on “Strengthening social cohesion in fragile and conflict-affected states”

Date: May 31 – June 01, 2023

Location: German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Bonn, Germany (in-person)

All around the world, increasing polarization, inequalities and autocratization, among other trends, put a strain on social cohesion. In fragile and conflict-affected states, this may contribute to or trigger an escalation of violent conflict. At the same time, strengthening social cohesion can potentially help to overcome fragility, address the root cause of violence and constitutes an important conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategy. Over the past decade, donors have increasingly financed social cohesion related projects. Yet, many questions remain regarding best strategies and approaches, the effectiveness of interventions as well as how to deal with challenges. This workshop brings together practitioners, policy makers and researchers working on peacebuilding and social cohesion in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to jointly reflect and exchange on the following questions:

- What is the value added of taking a social cohesion perspective to foster peace?
- How can international development cooperation (effectively) promote social cohesion and help overcome fragility and violence?
- What role do political institutions and autocratization trends play in these contexts?
- What challenges should be expected when taking a social cohesion approach and how can they be addressed?

To this end, the workshop will combine inputs from academics and comments by practitioners to set the stage for reflections and debate with interactive sessions and group discussions.

The workshop is organized by Fletcher Cox, Charlotte Fiedler and Karina Mross in the context of IDOS’s research project “Policies for Social cohesion in Africa”, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Day 1		
13:30 – 14:00	<i>Registration &amp; Coffee</i>	
14:00 – 14:40	<b>Welcome</b>	Introduction round Short input on definition of social cohesion (IDOS team)
14:40 – 16:00	<b>Session 1:</b> Promoting social cohesion in different contexts	<i>Interactive session with breakout groups</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-conflict</li> <li>• Fragile</li> <li>• In-conflict</li> </ul>

16:00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
16:30 – 17:45	<b>Session 2:</b> Effectiveness of interventions to (re)build social cohesion	<p><i>Virtual Keynote lecture</i> “Interventions for building social cohesion”</p> <p><b>Prof. Salma Mousa</b> (Yale University)</p> <p>Commented by <b>Dr. Martin Schuldes</b> (BMZ, Head of division peace and security, disaster risk management)</p>
18:00	Dinner reception & informal get together	
<b>Day 2</b>		
08:45 – 09:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
09:00 – 10:30	<b>Session 3:</b> Democratic institutions, autocratization and social cohesion	<p><i>Short input</i></p> <p><b>Dr. Charlotte Fiedler</b> (IDOS) &amp; <b>Dr. Karina Mross</b> (IDOS): What role can local elections play for social cohesion?</p> <p><b>Dr. Julia Leininger</b> (IDOS) &amp; <b>Daniel Nowack</b> (IDOS): Democracy, autocratization and social cohesion</p>
10:50 – 12:00	<b>Session 4:</b> Pitfalls and problems when fostering social cohesion in fragile and conflict-affected contexts	<p><i>Short input</i></p> <p><b>Prof. Timothy Sisk</b> (Josef Korbel School of International Studies) &amp; <b>Prof. Fletcher Cox</b> (William Jewell College): Confronting dilemmas and challenges of advancing social cohesion</p>
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunchbreak</i>	
13:00 – 14:15	<b>Session 5:</b> Future avenues for research and policy-making	<p><i>Panel &amp; fishbowl discussion</i> Kick-off by:</p> <p><b>Dr. Julia Leininger</b> (IDOS), <b>Dr. Jannie Lilja</b> (SIPRI), <b>Prof. Timothy Sisk</b> (Josef Korbel School of International Studies)</p>