



Concept Note

Diversity Advancement in the Arab Region (DAAR)

Inception Phase

0.1 Draft, 28th October 2019

Summary

We live in a complex, interconnected world where diversity, shaped by globalization and technological advance, forms the fabric of modern society. Taking advantage of diversity, based on respect for universal human rights, has important cultural, economic, fiscal, and developmental benefits. However, reaping these benefits requires overcoming social fragmentation and divisive narratives and reforming unjust institutional and legislative infrastructure and practices in support of new, cross-cutting forms of social solidarity and more encompassing citizenship.

The demographic, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of the Arab region has long stood as a source, and example, of resilience for societies and economies in the region. Notwithstanding, throughout recent decades recurrent tensions, some of which are between ethnic, religious and demographic groups, have erupted over the shape of political and economic institutions. Following the Arab Spring, with high levels of displacement, deteriorating economic outcomes, and ongoing political transitions, the region is today faced with calls for social justice and fair representation alongside polarization fuelled by identity politics and nationalist ideals.

The Sustainable Development Agenda recognizes that for nations to flourish, equality and prosperity must be available to everyone - regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs or economic status. When every individual is self-sufficient, the entire world prospers. In addition to individual targets, the SDGs identify the need for coherent cross-sectoral policies identifying and targeting those who are left behind by the dividends of development progress.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 has set global targets to reduce inequality within and between countries by 2030, and explicitly recognises that efforts to reduce inequalities of outcome must end inequality of opportunity, promote social, economic and political inclusion, and end discrimination in law, policy and practice. Goal 16 stresses that to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, countries should provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Peace, justice and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are at the core of sustainable development.¹

	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Key Targets	
	10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
	10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Key Targets	
	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
	16. B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Taking note of the dynamics that continue to shape and re-shape individual Arab countries and the region, UNDP's three-year "Diversity Advancement in the Arab Region" (DAAR) project will build a regional knowledge platform with a focus on supporting national policy making in support of inclusive citizenship

¹ Refer to <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>.

and improving the targeting of inclusion in UNDP's 'core' programming. Economies of scale available at regional level, will be used to ensure countries can access knowledge, methodologies and analytical tools. In parallel, in recognition of the growing importance of inclusion in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, DAAR will launch a regional 'lighthouse' initiative using innovative technologies to monitor trends in hate speech and/or violent verbal content and discriminatory narratives in the region to understand and deconstruct divisive narratives that feed on fake news and disinformation.

in support of the targets of SDG 10 (in particular SDG 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3) and SDG 16, and commitments to leaving no one behind, the DAAR project forms part of outcome 2 of the UNDP Regional Programme document for Arab States (2018- 2021): Strengthen institutions to promote inclusive participation, prevent conflict and build peaceful societies. DAAR will contribute results to output 2.2.2 - Regional platforms for policy dialogue enabled to support civic engagement, constitution-making, electoral and parliamentary processes and institutions to promote inclusion, transparency and accountability (Strategic Plan 2.2.2) , and output 2.2.3 - Regional and sub-regional dialogue and policy space expanded to support national capacities for social cohesion, prevention of violent extremism and durable solutions to displacement (Strategic Plan 3.2.1; 3.3.2). It will also investigate how diversity enhancement can be supportive of "Accelerating structural transformation of productive capacities in a sustainable and inclusive manner" (RDP 2018-2021).

Introduction

Since 2011, the exclusive nature of political, economic and social institutions and processes in the Arab region, have manifested themselves in social discontent, popular uprisings and collisions of identity politics. Conflictive and violent transitions and/or polarizing developments in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Yemen, have demonstrated the risks of the manipulation of diversity and identity when a recent history of exclusion is combined with weak state capacity and legitimacy. In countries neighbouring those impacted by crises, histories of tolerance are being strained by rising economic recessions, spill-over effects and high refugee flows.²

At a regional level, there are important initiatives that address issues related to corruption, electoral reform and institutional building, but these lack a convening or cooperation framework that links state-society relationships to intergroup dynamics.³ At a national level, many countries are faced a continued need to build trust in ongoing transitions, particularly where external interventions have stoked intergroup polarization or where short-term stability has come at the cost of inclusivity.

The mixed trajectories across the region are proof that the Arab region is a complex and diverse world. Diversity has always been manifest in its multiple dimensions: The region has one of the highest ethnic, tribal, religious, and linguistic diversities in the world, and has drawn on a history and tradition of cosmopolitanism and hospitality in accommodating different cultures, religions and political inclinations in recent history.

In Arabic, DAAR (دار) refers to the family's house in one's hometown, where the door is usually kept slightly open as an indication that the owners of the house are hospitable, generous and warm-hearted towards others especially those who are coming from outside the hometown,

² UNHCR (2019). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018. As has been the case since 2014, the main country of origin for refugees in 2018 was Syria, with 6.7 million at the end of the year, the vast majority (85 per cent) of which remain in countries in the region, in addition the Arab region has received 5.5 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate, as well as refugees from Iraq, Iran, and other countries. Globally Lebanon, for example, continues to host the largest number of refugees relative to its national population, where 1 in 6 people was a refugee. Jordan (1 in 14) and Turkey (1 in 22) ranked second and third, respectively.

³ See for example, the 'Unified Arab Strategic Plan for Alliance of Civilizations (2016-2019)', League of Arab States General Secretariat Social Affairs Sector Dialogue of Civilizations Department.

i.e. the “foreigners”, as an indication that the owners are willing to “share” their food and can be considered a safe haven away from imminent danger.

UNDP RBAS is committed to reverse the negative trends and promote the Arab Regions history of diversity, in line with UNDP’s Strategic Plan. The “Diversity Advancement in the Arab Region” (DAAR) is a three-year project with the objective of strengthening national, cross-country and regional efforts to safeguard, accommodate and promote diversity in the Arab States region within a framework of inclusive citizenship.

This effort is undertaken out of recognition of the interlinkages between economic, social and political spheres in achievement of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Studies have shown that diversity is likely to have important cultural, economic, and developmental benefits in the long run, but reaping the benefits of diversity requires overcoming social fragmentation by creating new, cross-cutting forms of inclusion and social solidarity, more encompassing identities and a citizenship framework that allows for differences and different identities.⁴

Context: Rising polarization amid a changing social contract

The series of anti-government protests and uprisings that started in Tunisia and spread to several countries in the Arab world in 2011 have resulted in divergent outcomes, with some countries undergoing democratic transition, others descending into civil conflict and/or waves of violent extremism, and others reverting to the old status quo despite changes in leadership.

The 2016 Arab Human Development Report⁵ pointed that the post-2011 powerful protests sent an alarming message; that “it was no longer possible to contain the pressure for change” ... “civic engagement in politics had been expanding in the run-up to the uprisings, and youth took a leading role in this development”.⁶

Since 2011, protests across the Arab region have highlighted the voice of the youth and their desire to be politically engaged. Whilst people between the ages of 15-29 make up over 30% of the population, despite political transitions, their continued exclusion from political, social and economic life remains a source of instability. As the 2016 Arab Human Development Report noted, “the policies and practices of exclusion across various fields, the lack of sufficient protection of political freedoms and human rights, weak economic competitiveness and the failure to establish good governance— particularly through greater transparency and accountability—are threatening the future prospects of youth.”⁷

At the same time, since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, over five million refugees have settled in neighbouring countries, the world’s second-largest refugee population, after the Palestinians. This massive refugee movement follows others, such as the displacement of Lebanese from 1975 to 1990 or Iraqis since the early 1980s, and is compounded by extensive regional migration. The Arab region is home to 14 million refugees and 15.1 million internally displaced persons, making up 55% and 38.5% of the world’s, respectively. In Lebanon almost one in seven people is a refugee, whilst in Jordan roughly one in 11 people is a refugee, the highest proportions in the world.

⁴ Putnam, Robert. (2007). ‘E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture’, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 30 – No. 2, 2007

⁵ UNDP, 20016, available at <http://www.arab-hdr.org>

⁶ UNDP. (2016). *Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality*. New York.

⁷ UNDP. (2016). *Arab Human Development Report 2016: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality*. New York.

These demographic strains must be placed in the context of the deteriorating economic situation in many Arab countries today. Real growth rates in non-oil Arab countries are projected at 3.1% and 3.4% in 2019 and 2020, respectively, down from an average of 6.2% over 2000-2015. In 2015, 25% of the region's (10 countries surveyed) population was considered as being vulnerable to poverty, while 40.6% were considered poor or severely poor across multiple dimensions.⁸ Unemployment averages 11% throughout the Arab region versus 7 percent across other emerging market and developing economies. The youth unemployment rate in the Arab region is the highest in the world at 25.6 percent.

In addition, shrinking fiscal space makes it much harder for governments to act as employer of last resort or to deliver on the basic needs of its citizens. The overall fiscal situation of the region is projected to register a deficit of 4.4% down from a surplus of 4% over 2000-2015, the highest since 2019 (IMF, October 2019 Outlook). Public debt levels are high in many countries—exceeding 85 percent of GDP on average, and more than 150 percent in Lebanon and Sudan.

The rippling effect of what is now referred to as the Second Wave of the Arab Spring (2018-onwards) show that although new political actors have taken the stage, faced with competing risks it is becoming difficult to maintain the status quo without significant legal, institutional and economic reform. The IMF's Social Unrest Index (RSUI) shows that reported social unrest has risen to highs not seen since 2014.⁹ The reactions to these protests have made clear that communities increasingly perceive that they have been discriminated against not only based on gender, age or income group but also based on region, ethnicity, or religion.

It is at times of deteriorating economic conditions and rising social unrest when safeguarding diversity becomes an urgent priority. During difficult times, citizens and communities are faced with the choice of either to overcome divisive lines towards a collective understanding of a common good or further descend into divisive camps to lock in a share of the shrinking pie.

Recent events show that disagreements over the political community have come at the expense of tolerance and inclusivity. Group tensions have found expression in sectarian/confessional civil strife in Iraq and Syria, identity politics in Lebanon, and along party lines in Egypt. In this environment, several governments have passed counterterrorism laws that have challenged freedom of speech and expression, whilst a rise of intolerance has mobilised around one-sided economic transformations, the politicization of social justice; and in some cases tensions between refugee and host populations.¹⁰ Despite a vocal and mobilised citizenry voicing their demands, the weakening of tolerance and acceptance of the "other" risks compounding marginalisation and is manifesting itself in rising hate speech, especially on social media platforms.

At the same time, other governments, in response to effective advocacy campaigns led by civil society organizations, have taken significant steps in the direction of strengthening inclusion and advancing diversity. The 2011 Moroccan Constitutional Referendum recognized Amazigh, the language spoken by the Berber community (make up one-fourth of the population as per the 2014 official census), as an official language alongside Arabic and the influence of other cultures, such as the Andalusian and more broadly the Mediterranean, on

⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), League of Arab States (LAS), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), 2017. "Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report". Available at: <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/multidimensional-arab-poverty-report-english.pdf>

⁹ IMF (2019), Regional Economic Outlook: Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

¹⁰ Wafa Ben Hassine The Crime of Speech: How Arab Governments Use the Law to Silence Expression Online, , pp. 29.

the Moroccan culture.¹¹ In October 2018, the Tunisian parliament passed the “Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination” Act. The UAE has also followed suit, declaring 2019 as the “Year of Tolerance” in community, in education, at workspace, to culture, in legislation and in media¹², and following the historic visit of Pope Francis to UAE where he signed a declaration of fraternity with the Grand Imam of al-Azhar. This follows the launch of the UAE National Tolerance Programme in 2016.¹³

The Arab Barometer is an important source of information on the perceptions of people living in Arab countries. The findings of the fifth wave in 2018 show that societal trust and tolerance are major issues in 12¹⁴ Arab countries, where 85% of those surveyed expressed high levels of mistrust towards other people and 33.8% either strongly dislike or dislike living with neighbours of a different religion.

A rebuilding of a social contract in the Middle East is required. Events show that for this to be successful, assistance is needed to both rebuild confidence between citizens and the state, and to look at how society defines the political community. Whilst media headlines are focused on geo-political confrontations, expert reporting and analysis, has highlighted the importance of growing divisions over the political community within countries as fostering insecurity and instability.

Conceptual Framework

With a rise in the number of conflicts globally since 2011, research and policy making on Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace has shifted from a focus on institutions¹⁵ to emphasising that conflict prevention cannot be adequately understood using state-centric perspectives alone.⁷ Recent research, for example the joint UN and World Bank Study *Pathways for Peace*, has underscored that although states hold ultimate responsibility, how societies manage diverse risks is equally important for building sustainable peace.¹⁶

Based on a review of the experience of different countries *Pathways for Peace* highlighted the importance of recognising and addressing group grievances based on perceived exclusion from access to power, opportunity and security. When an aggrieved group assigns blame to others or to the state for its perceived economic, political, or social exclusion, then emotions, collective memories, frustration over unmet expectations, and a narrative that rouses a group to violence can all play a role in mobilization to violence.¹⁷

¹¹ The 2011 Constitution of Morocco, available at (in Arabic) http://www.sgg.gov.ma/Portals/1/lois/constitution_2011_Ar.pdf (accessed on 27 October 2019).

¹² <https://www.worldtolerancesummit.com>

¹³ <https://www.government.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/national-tolerance-programme>

¹⁴ The surveyed countries are: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. Findings extracted using the online data analysis tool available at <https://www.arabbarometer.org/>

¹⁵ See World Bank (2011). World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.”

¹⁶ United Nations; World Bank. 2018. *Pathways for Peace : Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.”

¹⁷ Cederman, L.-E., A. Wimmer, and B. Min. 2010. “Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis.” *World Politics* 62 (1): 87–119. Justino, P. 2017. “Linking Inequality and Political Conflict: The Role of Social Mobilization and Collective Action.” Background paper for the United Nation–World Bank Flagship Study, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, World Bank, Washington, DC. Nygard, H., K. Baghat, G. Barrett, K. Dupuy, S. Gates, S. Hillesund, S. A. Rustad, H. Strand, H. Urdal, and G. Østby. 2017. “Inequality and Armed Conflict: Evidence and Data.” Background paper for the United Nations– World Bank

The social contract has often been viewed through the lens of nations and states, as the legal definition of rights by the state (civil and political, social and economic, cultural and collective) in exchange for citizens' fulfilment of their duties (for example, paying taxes, obeying the law, and in some cases serving in the military).

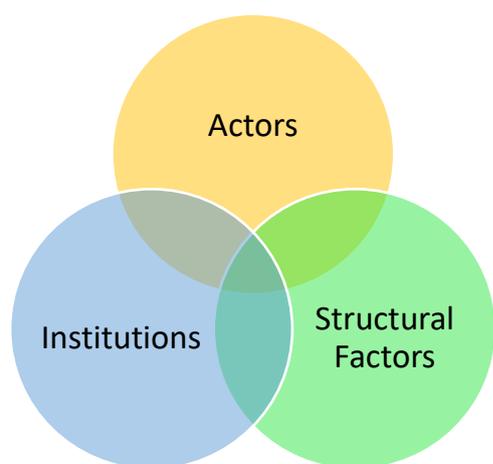
Pathways for Peace amongst other literature, however, highlights, that in many societies the social contract is as much based on relations between citizens, as the vertical relation between the state and the individual. In this framing the struggle for citizenship has been a dynamic and iterative process of interaction, negotiation and contestation within and between different actors in the state and society to determine how power is exercised and distributed, to shape rights and obligations and to (re)define the underlying rules of the game.

By focusing on 'inclusive citizenship', as a definition of the 'citizen' that embraces pluralism and diversity based on the legal recognition of universal rights, respect for differences, and justice based on equal status, efforts to reinforce the social contract can move beyond reinforcing the capability of the state's provision of goods and services, to help shape political narrative and legislative frameworks to focus on the engagement of marginalized groups and policies responsive to diverse needs.

This work has been translated to the Arab region. The 2019, Arab Human Development Report, focused on 'Leaving No One Behind: Towards Inclusive Citizenship in Arab Countries', highlights that Arab countries suffer from horizontal and vertical inequalities within societies and across state–society relations, that have translated into people being unable to exercise their rights as citizens. Rather than states alone determining citizen relations, in many countries, state and nonstate actors have together defined who enjoys citizenship rights and on what basis certain groups and people are excluded or "differentiated" in enjoying rights.

This approach reframes the concept of the social contract in the region from a model based on state and citizens, to one focused on the concept of inclusive citizenship committed to mobilising public and private stakeholders to engage in the process of defining the parameters of the political community.

The DAAR project recognises three entry points for engagement on the promotion of the concept of 'inclusive citizenship':



composition, or distribution of resources.

- **ACTORS** are individuals, social groups, or civil society organizations who make decisions, in cooperation or competition with one another, that determine the pathway.
- **INSTITUTIONS** provide the "rules of the game," both formal, legal frameworks and informal social norms and values that can determine actors' behaviour, incentives, and capacity to work together.
- **STRUCTURAL FACTORS** are the foundational elements of society that determine its essential organization. Structural factors include, for example, geography, economic or environmental systems, political structures, demographic

Structural factors include, for example, geography, economic or environmental systems, political structures, demographic composition, or distribution of resources. In general, structural factors do not change easily, and when they do, they do so only over relatively long periods of time.

Efforts to reinforce respect for diversity and inclusive citizenship within societies must, therefore, focus **on institutions, as they change their rules and policies, and on the decisions by individual actors, with the overall objective of changing the structural conditions.** Capable, legitimate institutions can make peace easier to maintain, however, it is actors – working together - who determine the direction society will go.

A strategic approach to addressing diversity will need to address narratives around exclusion and foster agreement amongst actors to undertake effective reform of institutions and/or policy in support of inclusive citizenship and diversity.

- **Short-term** actors think socially and are heavily influenced by social norms and narratives shaped by the social environment. An effective prevention strategy requires a focus on the narratives that elites and groups use to structure reality, and appeal to emotions. Narratives can be used to mobilise grievances. A narrative around diversity and inclusion, on the other hand, can avert polarisation, overcome social fragmentation and create new, cross-cutting forms of social solidarity and more encompassing identities.
- **Medium-term**, achieving impact by promoting diversity requires a focus on institutional or policy reform in arenas where access to power, resources, and security are contested. These arenas define who has access to political power and representation, natural resources (in particular, land and extractives), security and justice, and basic services and institutional reforms in these arenas, can over time impact on structural factors.

Beyond a general focus on diversity, it is important to focus on narratives, policy and institutional reform, in specific areas of greatest impact.

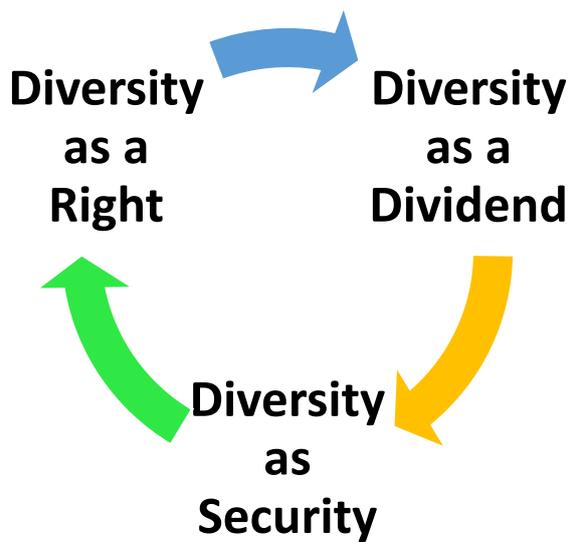
Focus Areas

The 2018 United Nations and World Bank Group *Pathways to Peace* study identified specific policy arenas/ sector, in which the well-being and quality of life of individuals are determined. These 'arenas of contestation' determine the political and social balance of a society, and are those areas in which overlapping marginalisation and exclusion have most impact.

The DAAR project will focus policy, research and action around these three arenas of contestation.

Diversity as a Right

Political inclusion and representation give individuals confidence that economic and other resources are distributed and managed on their behalf. Recognising ongoing efforts to integrate and incorporate the SDGs and "leaving no one behind", DAAR will work to ensure calls for rights



expressed in the streets find expression in national strategies, policymaking and legal frameworks.

Diversity as a Dividend

Diversity improves several economic indicators, from productivity, labour participation, and taxation, to improving the flow of labour, goods, services, and knowledge. To accelerate growth and create jobs for millions of unemployed youth, countries in the Arab region will have to develop an economy that takes advantage of diversity as an asset.

Diversity as Security

Security and justice institutions, whether formal or informal, limit the harm that violence can cause. Faced with multifaceted threats and rapidly evolving technologies, countries, increasingly recognise, that diversity in security and justice institutions, can help to improve public trust and outreach amongst communities.

Project Approach

The Arab region is constituted of countries where, diversity and tolerance is already under siege through attacks or violence against innocent populations, countries managing spill-overs from ongoing conflicts, including large numbers of refugees, whose presence is increasing pressure on diversity and tolerance, and countries where questions of diversity and tolerance are broad challenges often confronted by specific populations.

As an integral part of the UNDP Regional Programme for Arab States, DAAR is informed by

- a) a **rights-based approach**, ensuring that programme activities advance the system of rights and corresponding obligations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and are based on participatory and inclusive processes, with particular attention to inclusion of women, youth and marginalised groups;
- b) a **sustainable development approach**, recognising the shared responsibility to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the interconnected nature of economic, social and environmental development, DAAR will focus on Leaving no one behind as a means of moving beyond assessing average and aggregate progress, towards ensuring progress for all population groups at a disaggregated level.

This Regional Project is built upon three modalities of intervention, which includes:

- a) **Evidence-based research and Diagnostics**; DAAR will gather and analyse all data and information revealing gaps and trends in SDG implementation between sub-populations and/or geographic localities to identify empirically groups that are being left behind. The project will, focus on how discrimination by age, sex, gender, social background, religion or ethnicity is impacting on groups development progress. Based

on this data, the project will seek diverse feedback and input from stakeholders, including groups and populations left behind.¹⁸

b) Provision of Tools and Lessons; The objective of the regional project is to consolidate country, regional and global knowledge and lessons, in order to produce tools for to improve the targeting and effectiveness of country programmes. To support this work, DAAR will combine relevant national and UN development, human rights, conflict, inequalities, political, risk and humanitarian analysis for more joined up assessment of how exclusion impacts development and peace in the region. DAAR will bring together existing national, regional and global initiatives focused on addressing diversity promotion regularly to review trends, and identify lessons on development solutions that have been applied to address gaps in diversity promotion.

c) Programme Support and Country Initiatives: Based on regional analysis and country diagnostics, DAAR will provide support to country initiatives, through existing programming, aimed at enhancing provision of security and justice, political inclusion or economic livelihoods to identified excluded groups.

Beyond research and programming, DAAR will maintain dedicated resources regionally to a launch an evidence-based advocacy campaign communicating the benefits of diversity in the Arab region at regional and country level to policy makers and opinion shapers. :

Levels of Intervention

DAAR will be implemented at three levels, country; regional and global. See below for more information:

Country Engagement:

- The objective of DAAR is to reinforce national efforts in areas of UNDP's 'core' programming in governance, economic development and social justice through UNDP Country Offices. The project will take a differentiated approach based on national priorities to support efforts in all countries of the Arab Region.

Regional engagement:

- A regional project offers a flexible and depoliticized space to address issues perceived as controversial at the country level. At the regional level, DAAR will provide a platform for research, evidence and dialogue to support economies of scale and knowledge exchange in the dissemination of knowledge, methodologies and tools.

Global engagement:

- DAAR builds upon the global policy and expertise of the UN system and seeks to complement the work of other actors working in this domain through partnerships, collaboration and coordination. This project will take advantage of UNDP's global presence and tools to undertake global advocacy and communication in support of efforts to promote inclusive citizenship across the Arab region.

Partnerships

This project builds upon and seeks to complement the work of a wide range of other actors working in this space. More specifically, we will seek to engage these actors not simply as

¹⁸ UNDG (2019) *Operational Guide on Leaving No One Behind*. <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Interim-Draft-Operational-Guide-on-LNOB-for-UNCTs.pdf>

implementers but as active participants in the design and tailoring of the engagements contained in this document to ensure they are informed both by cutting-edge thinking and lessons learned, as well as the country context. This will also help ensure a continuous process of cross-fertilisation and adaptation between our project and those of our partners.

The below lists serves only as an example of actors and initiatives we will be drawing upon and/or, where possible, working with, to ensure the success of this engagement:

- **UN System broadly:** eg. ESCWA,
- **Bilateral actors/Member States:** This project will also build upon and collaborate with a wide range of Member States who are already working extensively on issues related to inclusive citizenship.
- **Civil society:** We will work closely with civil society in all target countries as appropriate, and seek to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of actors also in countries that do not necessarily form part of this project. For example, Similarly our work with media outlets will be instrumental, including partnerships with DW, BBC, France 24, and regional and local media outlets. Religious entities also form a highly strategic partner in this project.
- **Academia and think-tanks:** UNDP is already working with many academics and have strong ties with some universities and research think tanks. UNDP will expand partnerships with academic networks including those in the Arab Region. Universities will be leveraged as important impartial platforms for bringing together diverse groups of young people to dialogue on sensitive issues.
- **Private sector:** Businesses are engines for economic growth, having the potential to create jobs, foster economic activity through their value chain, and contribute tax revenues for public services and infrastructure. All businesses have the responsibility to respect human rights, and can implement policies on respect for human rights including worker's rights (collective bargaining, decent work conditions, etc.).

Objectives and Outputs

Objectives: **Build national, cross-country and regional coalition to safeguard, accommodate and promote diversity in the Arab States region**

Output 1: **Building a Platform for Regional Policy Dialogue on Diversity Advancement in the Arab Region**

Through partnerships with international and regional thinktanks and research projects, UNDP will provide a convening platform to promote dialogue, coordination and collaboration on diversity in the Arab region. This platform will produce dedicated analysis to enhance the effectiveness of responses and to address gaps in programming and policy. This platform will focus on monitoring and production of cutting-edge research and effective advocacy on diversity in partnership with key think-tanks, policy institutes and academic institutions.

Key activities:

- A literature review and a baseline study on the 'state of diversity' in the Arab Region.

- Formation of a dedicated Regional Advisory Group of Experts to provide expert advice on how best to formulate and advance a research agenda on inclusive citizenship for the region.
- Development of a risk assessment methodology focused on identifying risks of exclusion or marginalisation from key arenas.

Output 2: Investing in Analytical Tools and New Technologies to deepen our understanding of intergroup dynamics and state-society relationship

In the context of the UN Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies, the DAAR project will launch an experimental project that will combine social, scientific and computational methods to understand and monitor online speech in the Arab context.

With the aim to capitalize on the potential of big data and AI technologies in the peacebuilding domain, DAAR will explore the use data collected from websites and social media (twitter, Forums, blogs, etc.), online and offline media (TV/Radio, prints and images) to assist in the monitoring and analysis of hate speech in the Arab region.¹⁹

This Project will benefit from previous work conducted by the UN Global Pulse such as “The Effect of Extremist Violence on Hateful Speech Online” (April 2018) to refine the research methodology, but it will propose a different conceptual framework. For the wider community, this Project will offer a multi-disciplinary and multi-lens methodology that helps in building a deeper understanding of drivers of hate speech as an expression/aggression that can be systematically practiced against a certain group(s).

The Project will create two levels of value proposition:

(1) External targeting development and human rights practitioners and academics, policy makers, civil society organizations, in addition to other agencies who have either attempted to conduct similar work by helping them refine the research tool or improve their programming and delivery.

- Increase synergies and collaboration between research and innovation projects in the Arab region by developing an integrated model that brings together machine learning with a multi-disciplinary group of researchers, data scientists and development practitioners;
- Position UNDP RBAS as an early explorer in future technologies in the Arab region, especially in the field of peacebuilding.

(2) Internal targeting UNDP programming

- Produce timely and relevant information on intensity, source and drivers of deep-rooted rather than reactionary hate speech that is triggered by an incident of violence;
- Modernize system(s) of data collection and reframe how big data is viewed;
- Develop a visualization and interactive system in the form of a dashboard and processes that can be easily replicated by other regions and country offices at UNDP; It will support multidisciplinary collaboration and research and nurture innovative research ecosystem to address the Arab region’s most pressing challenges to safeguard diversity by bringing together data scientists, sociologists, development practitioners, policy makers, statisticians and others.

¹⁹ This Project will benefit from previous work conducted by the UN Global Pulse such as “The Effect of Extremist Violence on Hateful Speech Online” (April 2018) to refine the research methodology, but it will propose a different conceptual framework, whereby reactionary verbal violence and spikes of hate speech will be acknowledged but filtered out in an attempt to draw a mapping of systematic, deep-rooted and entrenched hate speech (drivers, influencers, framing, etc.) in the societies. The other side of the coin is to form an understanding of the context when hate speech content is minimal and when the online community shows interest to discuss other matters, that are perhaps non-divisionary.

Key activities:

- Launching the 'Digital Lighthouse Initiative' monitoring Hate Speech on Social Media;

Output 3: Promote the use of legal, policy and regulatory frameworks to Secure Diversity

Countries in the Arab region are diverse in their diversity, yet for many countries, narratives and legal frameworks underscore ethnic, religious and social homogeneity. Achieving impact by promoting diversity requires a focus on institutional or policy reform in arenas where access to power, resources, and security are contested. In countries, like Sudan, the post-revolutionary moment has opened up the opportunity to address legacies of single party rule and colonial law, that emphasized homogeneity, whilst in countries such as Lebanon or Iraq, political systems based on legal entrenchment of personal identities is being challenged by universal demands for services and rights. Recognising that in many countries in the region, the first challenge to institutionalising diversity lies in the diminishing public space and dialogue, a strategic approach to addressing diversity will need to foster agreement, around which a basis for effective reform of legal, policy and regulatory frameworks in support of inclusive citizenship and diversity.

Based on the analysis undertaken in output 1 and 2, this project will work with established networks of civil society, parliamentarians and partners to identify where legal and regulatory reform is most critical to address discrimination, and advance inclusive citizenship. The project will engage in active advocacy and communication support to enhance the visibility and understanding of priority legislative reform.

Key Activities:

- Monitor and learn lessons on governance legislation and processes to safeguard diversity in the Arab Region;
- Engage in public dialogue on leave no one behind analysis;
- Encourage the adoption of anti-discriminatory legislation
- Design inclusive policies and changing practices using behavioural insights.

Output 4: Advancing Inclusion through Targetting of Recognition, Redistribution, and Representation

Poverty and under-development create grievances that can easily be exploited, especially when such factors are combined with poor governance, the absence of even basic service delivery and negative interactions with justice and security services. This situation is aggravated by high-levels of unemployment, leaving many youth frustrated, lacking in viable prospects for the future. UNDP and many other actors are already actively working in this area to improve job opportunities, youth entrepreneurship programmes, skills-building activities, and levels of education etc., with a view to lowering unemployment rates and improving livelihood opportunities. The problem is that such programmes are not currently targeted/tailored specifically towards those at risk. Activities in this area will leverage existing programmes to ensure they are targeting vulnerable groups. Where such interventions do not yet exist, this programme will help design interventions that fill in the gaps.

Actions and interventions should respond to the challenges, barriers and capacity gaps identified in the previous outputs. Based on country diagnostics and regional analysis, DAAR will provide additional support to existing programming to ensure that marginalised groups are consistently prioritized as beneficiaries of programming. They may benefit directly from UN support, particularly in humanitarian contexts, or indirectly from "upstream" support designed to ultimately benefit the furthest behind. Although efficiencies should be sought, programming

should not solely target the largest possible number of people, given the track record of improving “averages” without benefiting the furthest behind.

Key Activities:

- Developing targeting methodologies for poverty alleviation, governance, and rule of law programming

Why UNDP?

UNDP is the lead development agency in the UN system with presence in all countries in the Arab region, with regional presence in Beirut, Amman, and Cairo. At the regional level UNDP has over 120 technical experts covering the areas of governance and rule of law, conflict prevention, gender, youth empowerment, livelihoods, coordination of development assistance and supporting the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to our presence in the project’s 11 target countries, UNDP’s regional technical capacities will be deployed to support the implementation process.

UNDP brings to this project decades-old established networks and partnerships with civil society, faith-based groups, host governments and academic institutions to achieve the results articulated in this project.

Between 2016 and 2018, UNDP implemented a regional approach to social cohesion, Promoting Social Cohesion in the Arab Region,, with a focus on equal citizenship, trust among citizens as well as between citizen and state; and pluralistic acceptance of the other, of different faiths, confessions, ethnic backgrounds, and political ideologies. The project focused on the willingness of diverse stakeholders to participate collectively in a shared vision of sustainable peace and development goals.

Over the duration of PSCAR, UNDP and its partners invested in knowledge generation and exchange as well as advocating mechanisms to mainstream social cohesion sensitive approaches across policies and practices. The following outputs were achieved:

- (1) Regional knowledge and advocacy platforms to promote social cohesion facilitated and supported;
- (2) Governments and civil society actors to establish measures to advance social cohesion between citizen and state and restore legitimacy and trust in state institutions supported; and Tolerance, respect for diversity and higher social cohesion amongst different social groups promoted.

UNDP’s impartiality makes it a unique operator in an extremely delicate and politically-sensitive area of work.

Annex 1

SDG	Target	Indicator
SDG 10	10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities

	10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	10.3.1 Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
SDG 16	16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions
		16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group
	16. B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	16.B.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org		