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SOCIAL COHESION LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND RESILIENCE

December 7, 2021 | 8:30 - 10:00 AM ET

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- Select English or French: Everyone must select a language!

- Sélectionnez anglais ou français : Chacun doit choisir une langue !



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- Introduce yourself in the chat

- Remplissez le sondage sur votre écran
- Présentez-vous dans le chat

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N'oubliez pas :

- Mute yourself when not speaking
- Reach out to Suzanne or Emily in the chat for any tech support

- Coupez le son lorsque vous ne parlez pas
- Contactez Suzanne ou Emily dans le chat pour toute assistance technique.

AGENDA

- **Welcome**
- **Presentation**
 - Harnessing Local Sources of Social Cohesion in Niger
- **Panel discussion**
 - Lessons for Niger, the region and nexus programming
- **Audience Q&A**

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Harnessing Local Sources of Social Cohesion in Niger

Motivation: Evidence (and Evidence Gaps) on Social Cohesion

- Social cohesion is a set of values, identities, attitudes, and behaviors that help to hold society together.
- Strengthening social cohesion is a core objective of resilience and peacebuilding programming globally.
- There are major evidence gaps about the extent and sources of local-level variation in social cohesion.
- Filling these evidence gaps is vital to ensuring that humanitarian and development assistance effectively promote peace and resilience.

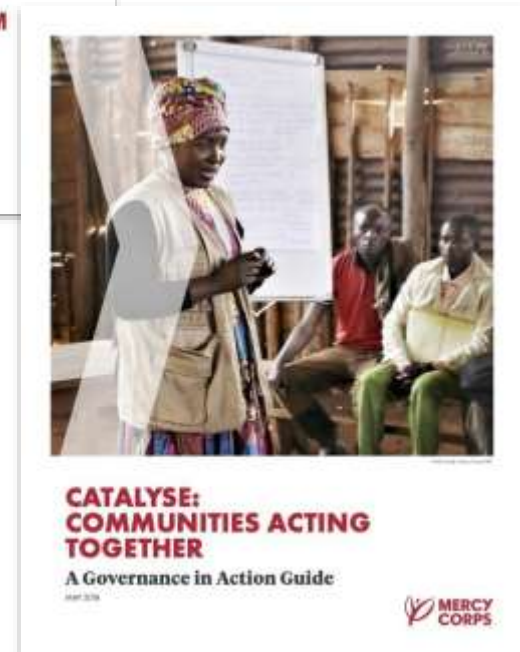
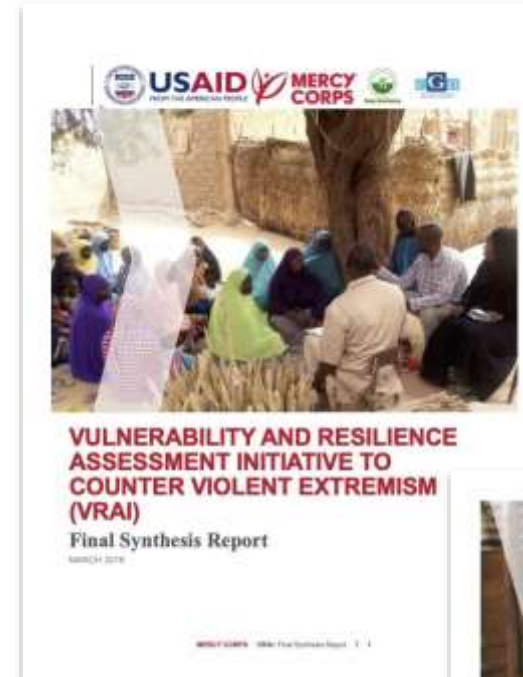
Background: The Tillabéri Region of Niger

- Multiple types of ongoing conflict
- Persistent underlying structural causes related to governance
- Substantial negative impacts on well-being



Background: The Mercy Corps PEACE Program

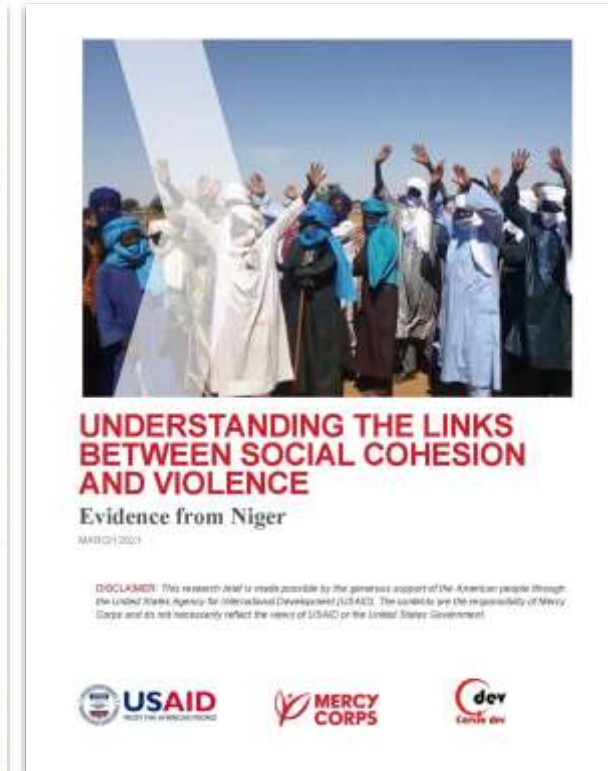
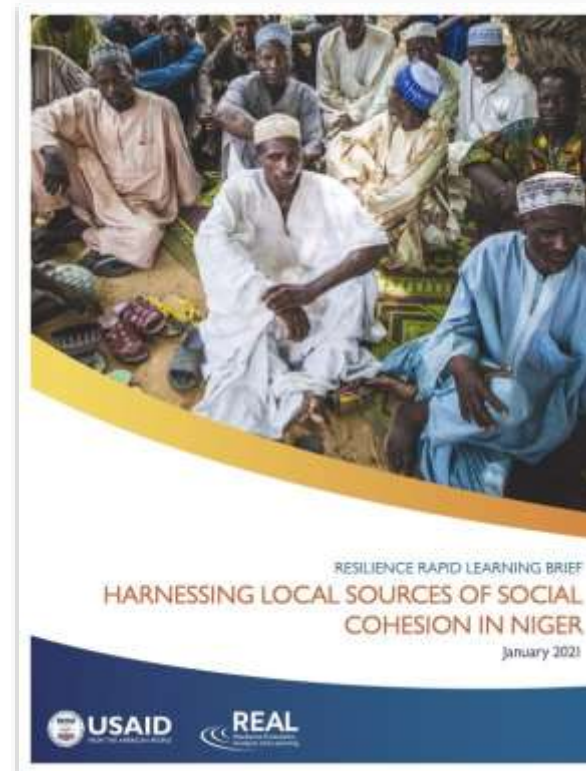
- Previous research identified role of social cohesion and intergroup dialogue in reducing community-level vulnerability to VEO activity
- Implementation of **community mobilization** and **joint projects** in **communities most vulnerable to VEO recruitment**
- Research and learning integrated into the entire lifecycle of PEACE to help design intervention and test key hypotheses in theory of change



Background: Research and Learning Within the PEACE Program

PEACE Program Research Questions

- What are the existing local factors that contribute to social cohesion?
- What aspects of social cohesion lead to increased resistance to recruitment by violent extremist groups?
- Within vulnerable communities, what are the most effective intervention to increase social cohesion and reduce vulnerability to VE?



Data and Methods: Measuring and Analyzing Social Cohesion

- **Overarching Research Question:** What are the existing local factors that contribute to social cohesion in Tillabéri?
- Baseline survey data for PEACE program- 575 respondents (12-15 individuals across 40 villages)
- The Mercy Corps program team used six survey questions to measure social cohesion:
 - **Trust.** Do you trust members of other groups with whom you do not have a good understanding?
 - **Quality of Interactions.** What is the level of interaction between you and members of other groups? (positive, negative)
 - **Tolerance.** Are you able to accept an idea/principle/advice from other groups that differ from your rules or principles?
 - **Collective Action.** Are you willing to work on an activity of common interest in the community with a member of other groups?
 - **Cooperation.** Do you believe there are benefits to cooperating with all the groups that exist in your community?
 - **Social Inclusion.** Are you in the habit of providing input in community decision-making?
- Analytic Approach- Individual-level regression analysis+ Village-level aggregate scores for each question (% saying yes/agree)
 - Social Cohesion Index Score- Village-level average across all six survey questions

Sub-question 1:

What are the overall patterns across the underlying dimensions of social cohesion and the relationships between these dimensions?



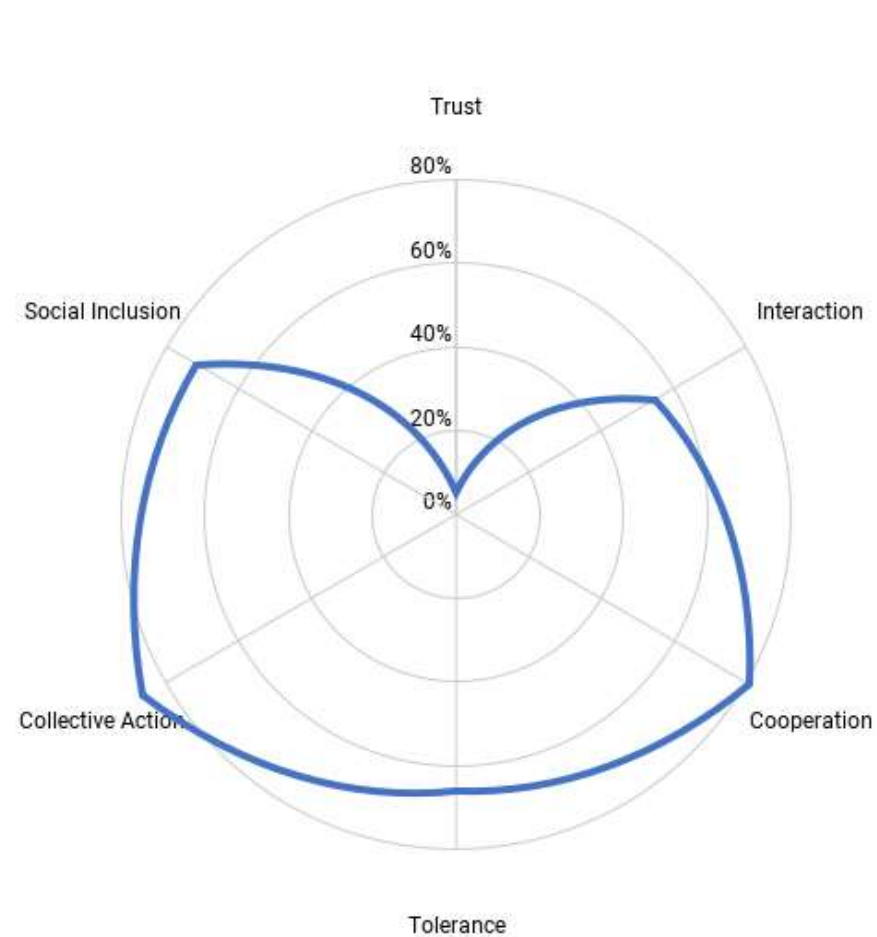
Finding 1:

Trust is the weakest component of social cohesion in this context...

but positive interactions are associated with higher intergroup trust.



Finding #1: Trust is the weakest component of social cohesion in this context... but positive interactions are associated with higher trust.



All Villages (Average):
Social Cohesion Index: **60.86%**
Lowest Dimension: **Trust (5.4%)**
2nd Lowest Dimension: **Interaction (54.86%)**
Highest Dimension: **Collective Action (86.44%)**

**Finding #1-
Key Takeaway:**
Invest in facilitating
processes for joint
projects that
foster positive
interactions.



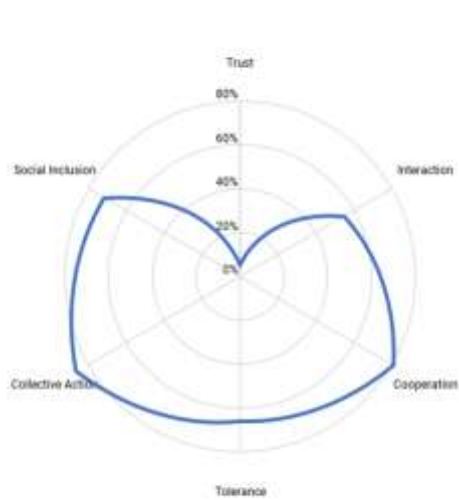


Sub-question 2:
To what extent do
the patterns across
underlying social
cohesion
dimensions vary
across villages?

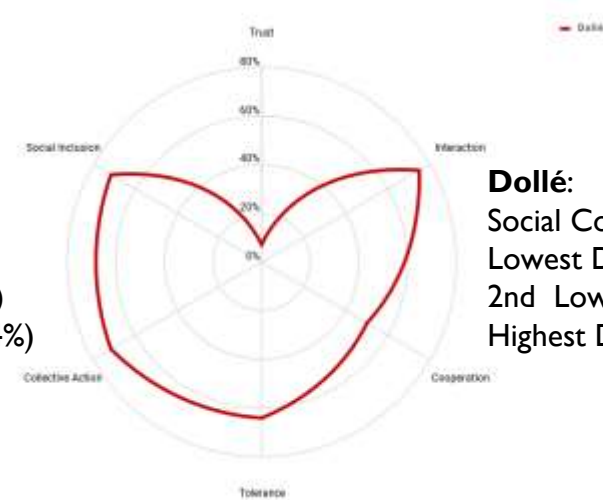


Finding #2:
Aggregate
measures can hide
meaningful
variation across
dimensions of
social cohesion
between villages.

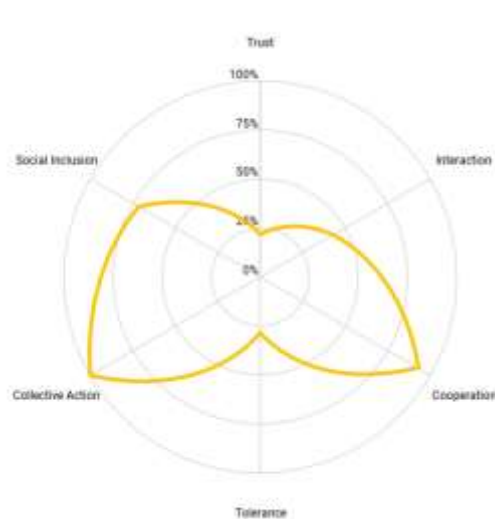
Finding #2: Aggregate measures hide meaningful variation across dimensions of social cohesion between villages.



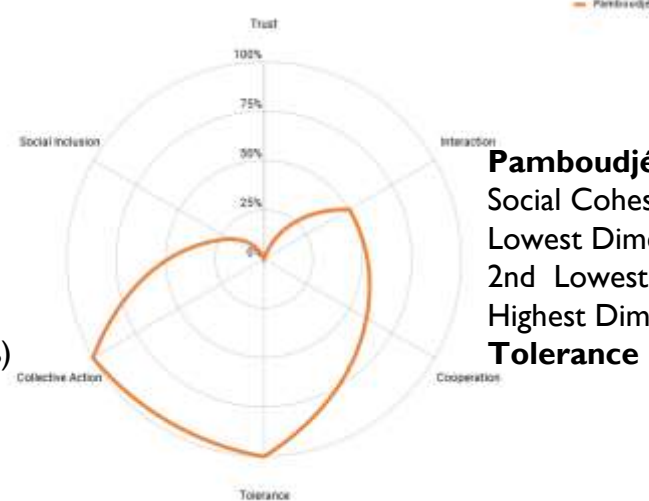
All Villages (Average):
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Dollé:
 Social Cohesion Index: **56.55%**
 Lowest Dimension: **Trust (7.14%)**
 2nd Lowest Dimension: **Cooperation (50.0%)**
 Highest Dimension: **Interaction (75%)**



Deberé Gatti:
 Social Cohesion Index: **59.52%**
 Lowest Dimension: **Trust (21.43%)**
 2nd Lowest Dimension: **Tolerance (28.57%)**
 Highest Dimension: **Collective Action (100%)**



Pamboudjé:
 Social Cohesion Index: **55%**
 Lowest Dimension: **Trust (0%)**
 2nd Lowest Dimension: **Social Inclusion (20%)**
 Highest Dimension: **Collective Action and Tolerance (100%)**



**Finding #2-
Key Takeaway:**
Tailor specific
interventions to
local variations in
underlying
dimensions of
social cohesion.

Sub-question #3:
To what extent do
patterns across
social cohesion
dimensions vary
across social
divisions?



Finding #3:
Attitudes and
behaviors
regarding social
cohesion vary by
gender.



Finding #3-
Key Takeaway:
Focus on elevating women's inclusion in decision-making when designing social cohesion interventions.





**Sub-question
#4:**
In what ways do
local governance
and social factors
shape variation in
social cohesion?



Finding #4:
High levels of access to public services are associated with strong social inclusion.



**Finding #4-
Key Takeaway:**
Combine efforts to
provide access to
services with an
emphasis on
facilitating inclusive
decision-making
processes.

Finding #5:
Conflict management mechanisms can help facilitate inclusion, but may not contribute to other dimensions of social cohesion.



Finding #5-
Key Takeaway:
Strengthen conflict
management
mechanisms by
investing in the
skills and
legitimacy of local
leaders.





Finding #6:
Trust in
leaders/institutions
is not necessarily
associated with
greater social
cohesion between
groups.



Finding #6-
Key Takeaway:
Design programs to
build cohesion
between identity
groups AND
between citizens and
leaders.

Core Lessons and Recommendations

- **Overall Takeaway:** There can be substantial local variation in the underlying components of social cohesion. As a result, strengthening social cohesion requires programming approaches that are **inclusive, flexible, targeted, layered, and evidence-driven.**

Process Recommendations	Technical Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carefully design and leverage an inclusive, participatory process to identify, design, and implement joint projects to model and reinforce social cohesion.• Create flexibility to tailor specific activities to the realities of individual villages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support positive interactions across groups to build trust and tolerance.• Promote the inclusion of women to contribute to better outcomes.• Layer intergroup contact and other activities onto governance-strengthening activities.• Pair efforts to strengthen inclusive and legitimate conflict management mechanisms with other approaches.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Panelists



Ifeoluwa Olawole,
Quantitative Research Specialist for
Peace, Conflict and Governance, Mercy
Corps



Lisa Inks,
Director of Peace and
Conflict on the Technical
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Dr. Ryan Sheely,
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Conflict and
Governance at Mercy
Corps



Siaka MILLOGO,
Director of Programs for Mercy
Corps Niger & Burkina Faso, based in
Niamey/Nige



Jessica Anderson,
Senior Conflict Advisor
with USAID's Center for
Resilience

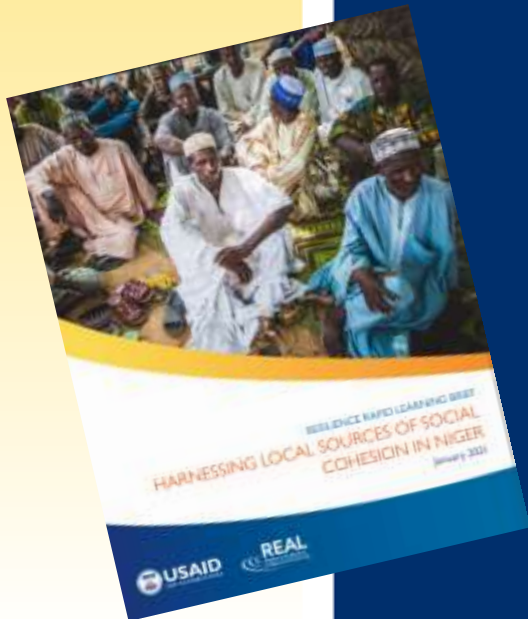
Q & A

REAL RESILIENCE IN PROTRACTED CRISES DISCUSSION SERIES

This series explores three main elements of resilience in protracted crises:

continuous context analysis,
strengthening violence prevention, and
supporting local market and social systems

Series will discuss how USAID investments can be better designed and delivered to protect current and future well-being in recurrent and protracted crises.



[*Discussion series info page - link in chat box*](#)

Thank You!

Merci !



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