



The Shared Societies Project:

Democratic Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity & Social Cohesion

Building a World Safe for Difference



WHY SHARED SOCIETIES?

Roma citizens expelled from France... Brutal attacks on Christians in Pakistan... Gay Iraqis murdered by militia forces... Violence against women in Ciudad Juarez... Ethnic clashes in Kenya... Bloodshed between Han Chinese and Muslim Uighurs... Headlines everyday tell us of identity-based conflict north and south, east and west.

A paradox of globalization is that the more we come together, the more we seem to fall apart. But fear of difference is not new. And, in times of crisis, apprehension grows as people cling to the familiar for fear of losing out to those who are different. Many leaders are comfortable catering to the majority – some even exploit tension between people of different identities to solidify political capital among their base. Research and practice show, however, that **societies are most likely to be peaceful and prosperous when leaders and citizens recognize and celebrate the value of diversity and actively build an inclusive, shared society safe for difference.**

A 'shared society' is a socially inclusive and cohesive society. It is stable and safe. It is where all those living there feel at home. It respects everyone's dignity and human rights while providing every individual with equal opportunity. It is tolerant. It respects diversity.

"In my own country, we realized that our problems could not be solved without people and leaders working together to create a shared society..."

I congratulate the Club of Madrid for taking the lead on this important matter to build shared societies and a world made safe for difference."

Nelson Mandela

LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL COHESION

A shared society is constructed and nurtured through strong political leadership. Most leaders if given the arguments, options and tools, would prefer to lead on behalf of all their citizens and build safe, inclusive societies where all feel equally a part of and contributor to society.

Leaders can and must lead the way to actively promote policies and practices that respect and celebrate diversity; reduce the hate, hurt and humiliation that undermine human dignity; and create opportunities to bring diverse people together around common projects and goals.

WHY THE SHARED SOCIETIES PROJECT?

As communities become ever more inter-twined and intercultural – ninety percent of the world's countries have at least a ten percent minority – leaders face the challenge of building and maintaining social cohesion challenges in their communities and countries. How they respond to social cohesion differs from leader to leader, but one element remains true for all: They need options and tools to address this challenge.

The Shared Societies Project was designed in response to an urgent call from leaders worldwide for arguments and action plans to help them effectively and constructively manage ethnic, cultural, religious and other identity differences – promoting human rights and respecting human dignity – to facilitate coexistence, inclusion, opportunity and participation.

GROUNDLED VISION • ACHIEVABLE GOALS

The Shared Societies Project has identified four key conditions if individuals and groups are to feel that they have an equal place in the society in which they live: Democratic Participation; Respect for Diversity and the Dignity of the Individual; Equal Opportunity; and Protection from Discrimination. Here's how the Project set out to achieve this vision:

Making the case, clearly and unambiguously:

- Overcoming identity-based divisions and building shared societies is urgent and critical.
- There are moral, social, political and economic arguments for inclusion.

Promoting partnerships and commitment:

- Work with leaders, multilateral organizations and civil society to design, agree and disseminate the principles and concepts for shared societies.
- Call leaders to action on commitments to promote shared societies.

Providing leaders with the right tools:

- Drawing on the unequalled experience, resources and convening power of Club de Madrid Members, provide leaders with the incentives and means to act to advance shared societies.
- Document and share policy and practice examples that show the imperative and benefit of social inclusion.
- Collect, develop and share econometric data showing that social inclusion improves a society's economic wellbeing.



ACTION • RESULTS

**The Club de Madrid
— 81 Former Presidents & Prime Ministers —
Working for Shared Societies**



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The Club de Madrid, whose Members possess more than two millennia of collective political experience, is uniquely positioned to help leaders around the world lead for social inclusion through its flagship Shared Societies Project. Here's how it's being done:

- Club de Madrid Members developed and endorsed a Vision, Rationale, Call to Action and Ten Commitments, or policy and practice action areas, with accompanying options; which, sent to 2000 policymakers, are provoking strong interest and support.
- Leaders in cities, regions and countries around the world are inviting collaboration with the Project. Club de Madrid Members have held elected office, understand what leaders face, and can support their peers with experience, trust and discretion.
- Club de Madrid Members and international experts have gathered good policy and practice worldwide through case-study missions and research, including the economic arguments. The result: a Toolkit for Leadership on Building Shared Societies.

"We really have no other alternative. We either learn to get along and respect one another — and not define each other by negative reference— while celebrating our diversity, or we are finished."

Bill Clinton

President of the United States of America (1993-2001)
Honorary Chair, Club de Madrid

• The UN, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, African Union, OAS, and others are taking up the language and concepts in their work.

• Civil society leaders are beginning to use Shared Societies concepts to encourage political leaders and hold them accountable for work on social inclusion.



TOOLKIT FOR LEADERSHIP ON SOCIAL COHESION

Designed as a compilation of best leadership policies and practices that promote social cohesion, this tool provides leaders with ample examples and arguments to lead towards social cohesion. It shows that shared societies are not only needed but also possible. Users will find inspiration and ideas from others who "have been there."

10 COMMITMENTS FOR SHARED SOCIETIES

The following Ten Commitments are key policy areas which are essential features of a shared society. Leaders are encouraged to commit to them. They can serve as a check list to review policy areas in which a state has made progress or where more work remains to be done.

- I. Locating responsibility of social cohesion within government structures
- II. Create opportunities for minorities to be consulted
- III. Monitor structures and policies to ensure they are supportive of social cohesion
- IV. Ensure the legal framework protects the rights of the individual
- V. Deal with economic disadvantages faced by those discriminated against
- VI. Ensure that physical environments create opportunities for social interaction
- VII. An education system that demonstrates a commitment to a shared society
- VIII. Initiate a process to encourage the creation of a shared vision of society
- IX. Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of diversity
- X. Take steps to reduce tensions and hostility between communities

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- **Chandrika Kumaratunga**
President, Sri Lanka (1994-2005)
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ABOUT THE CLUB DE MADRID

The Club de Madrid is an independent non-profit organization composed of 81 democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers from 57 different countries, constituting the world's largest forum of former Heads of State and Government, who have come together to respond to a growing demand for support among leaders in two key areas: democratic leadership and governance; and response to crisis and post-crisis situations.

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